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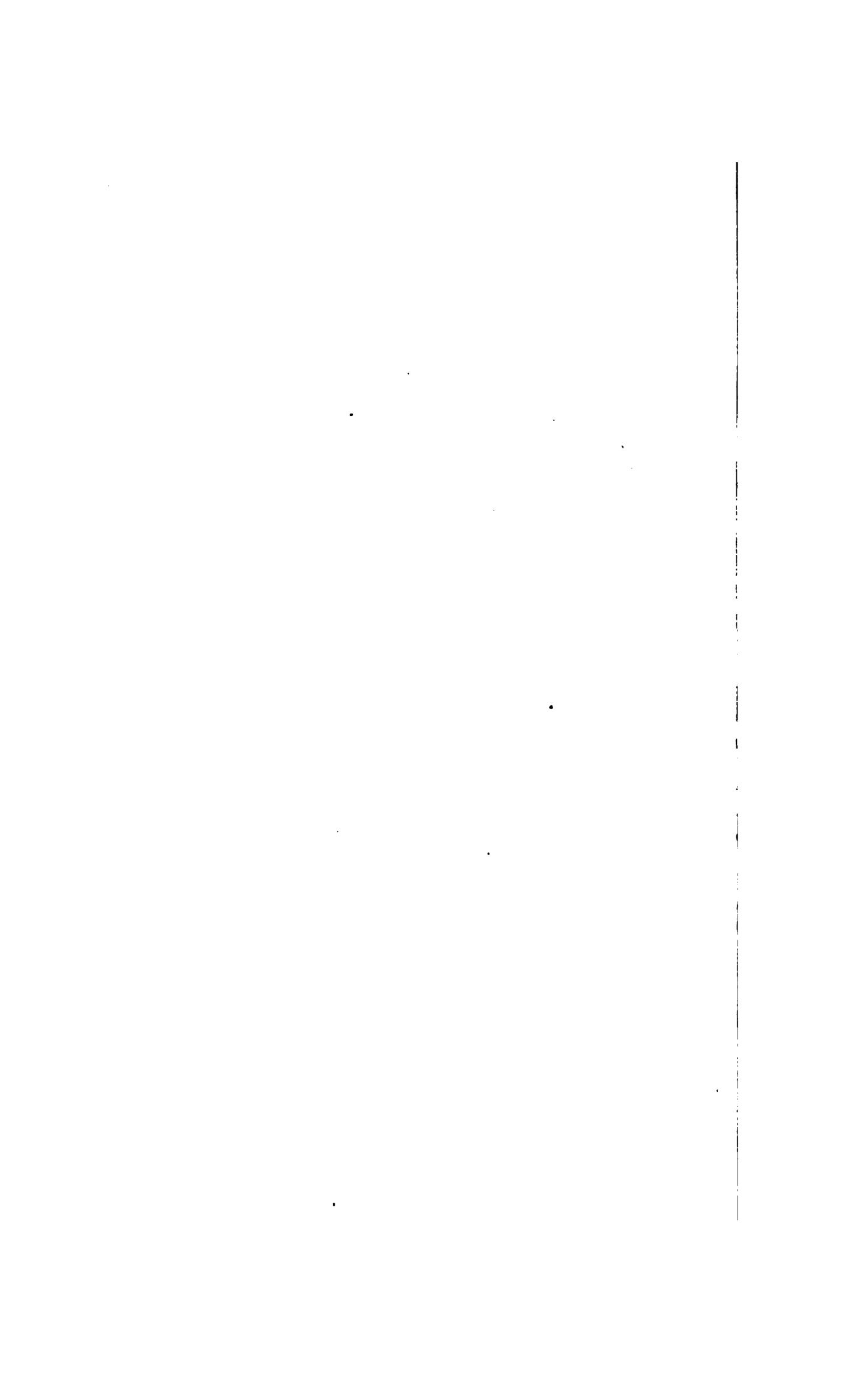
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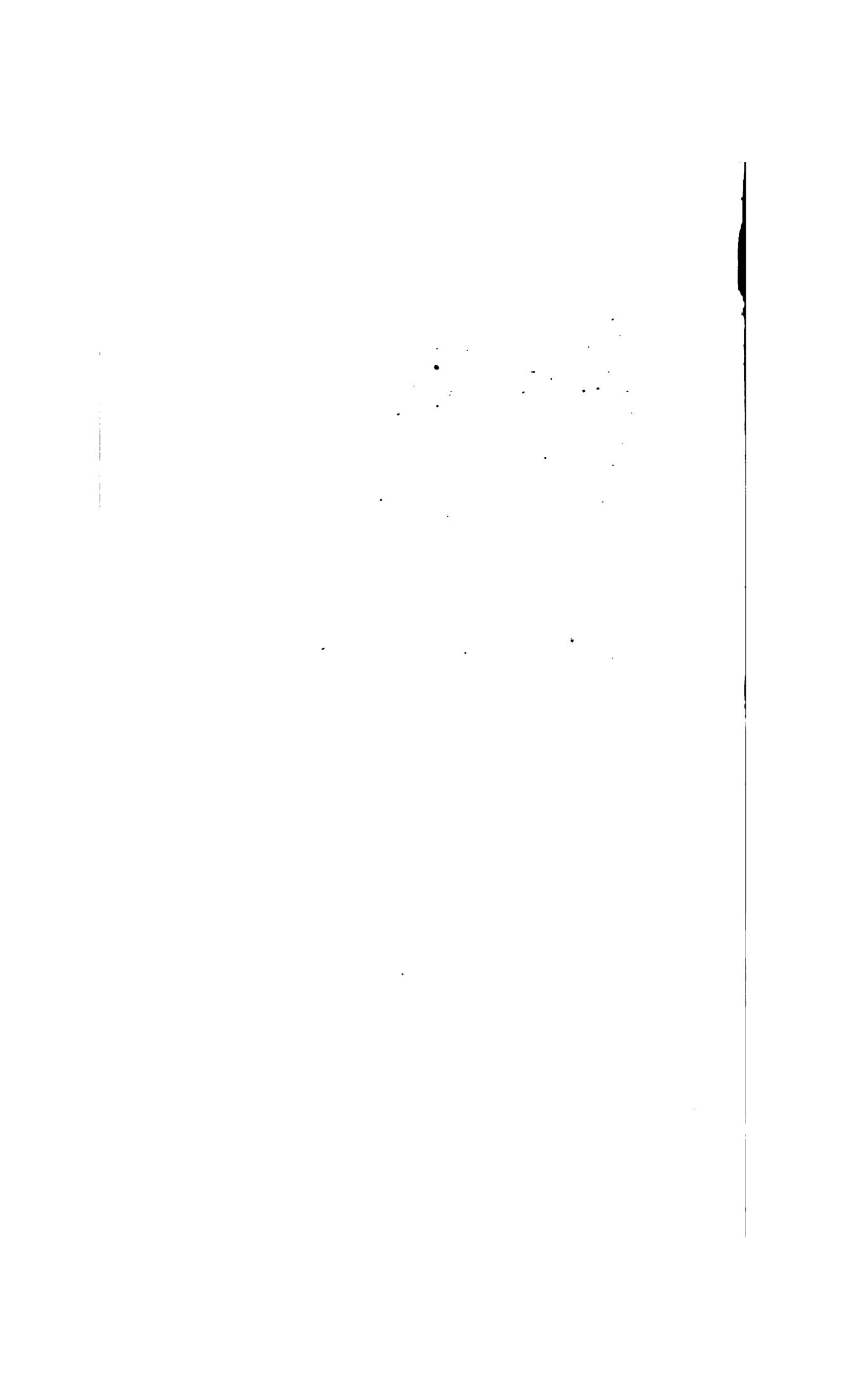
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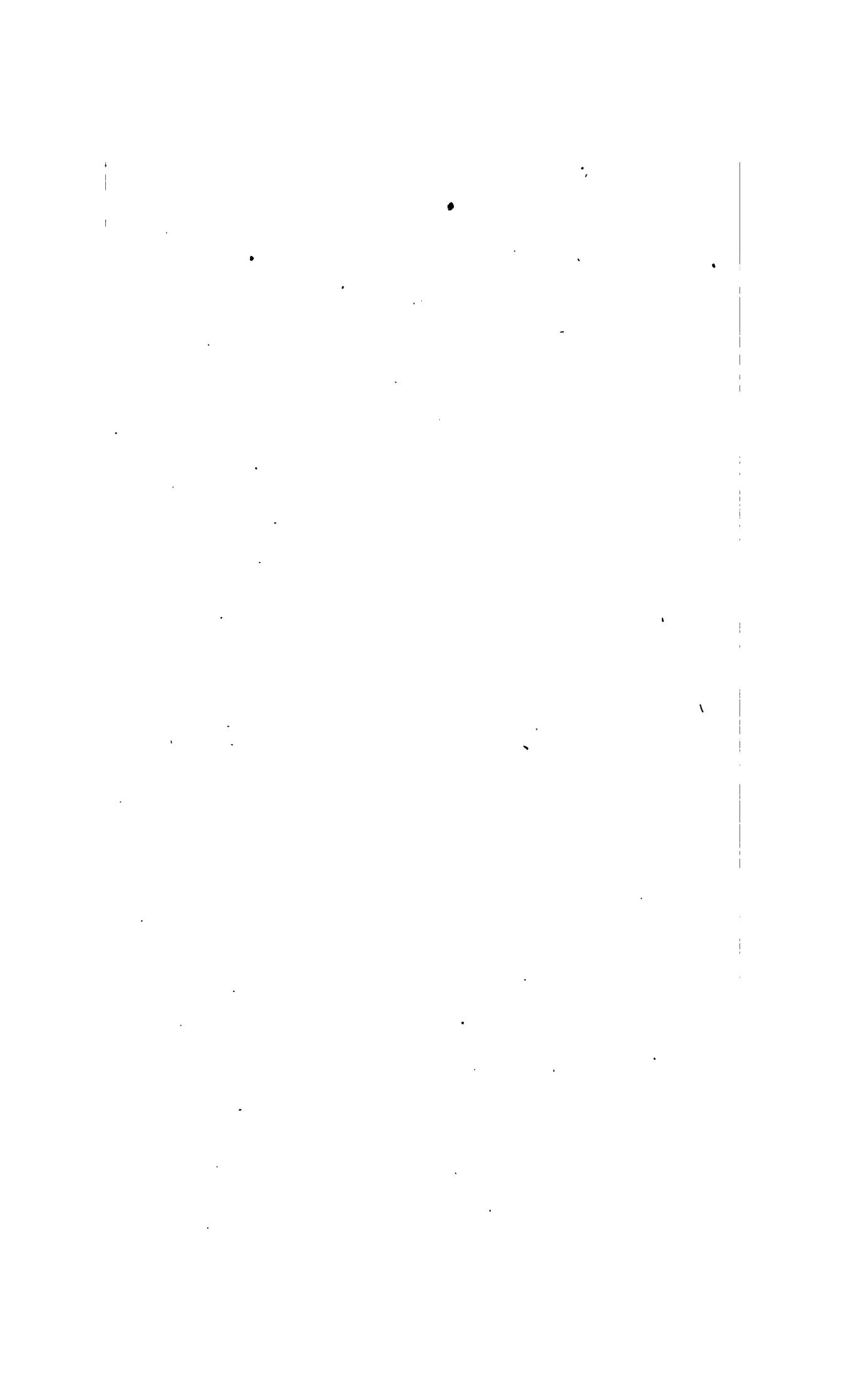
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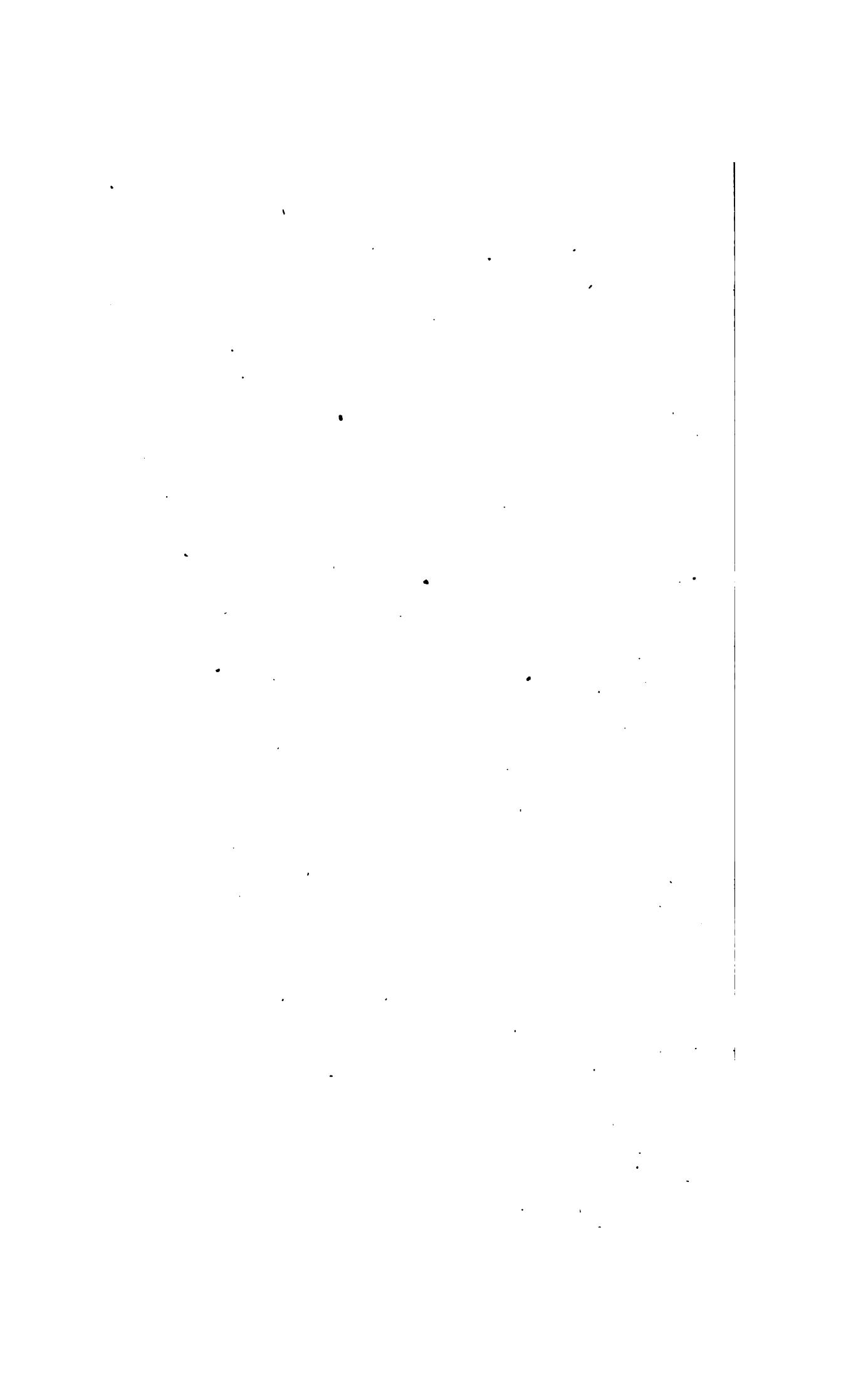




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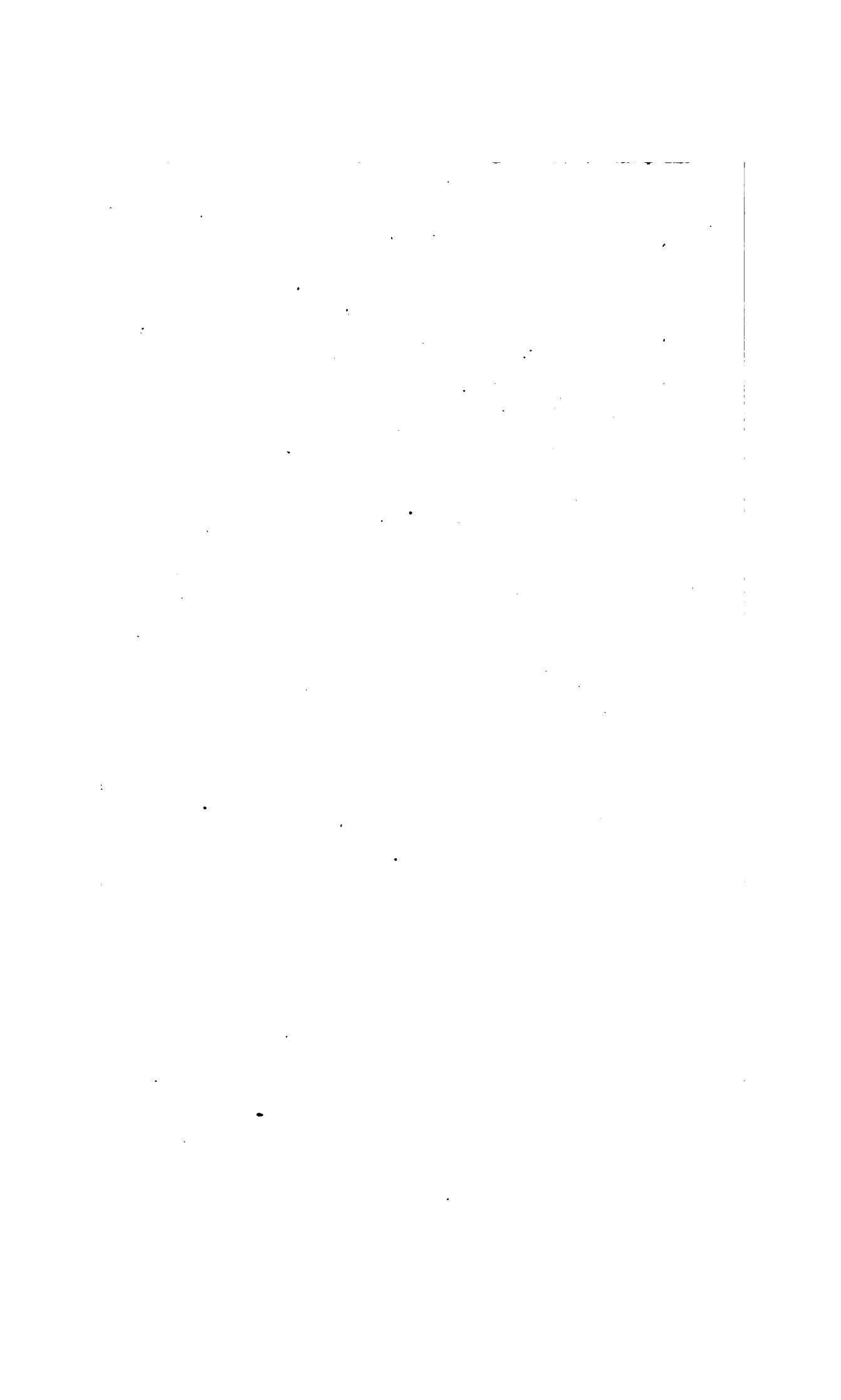


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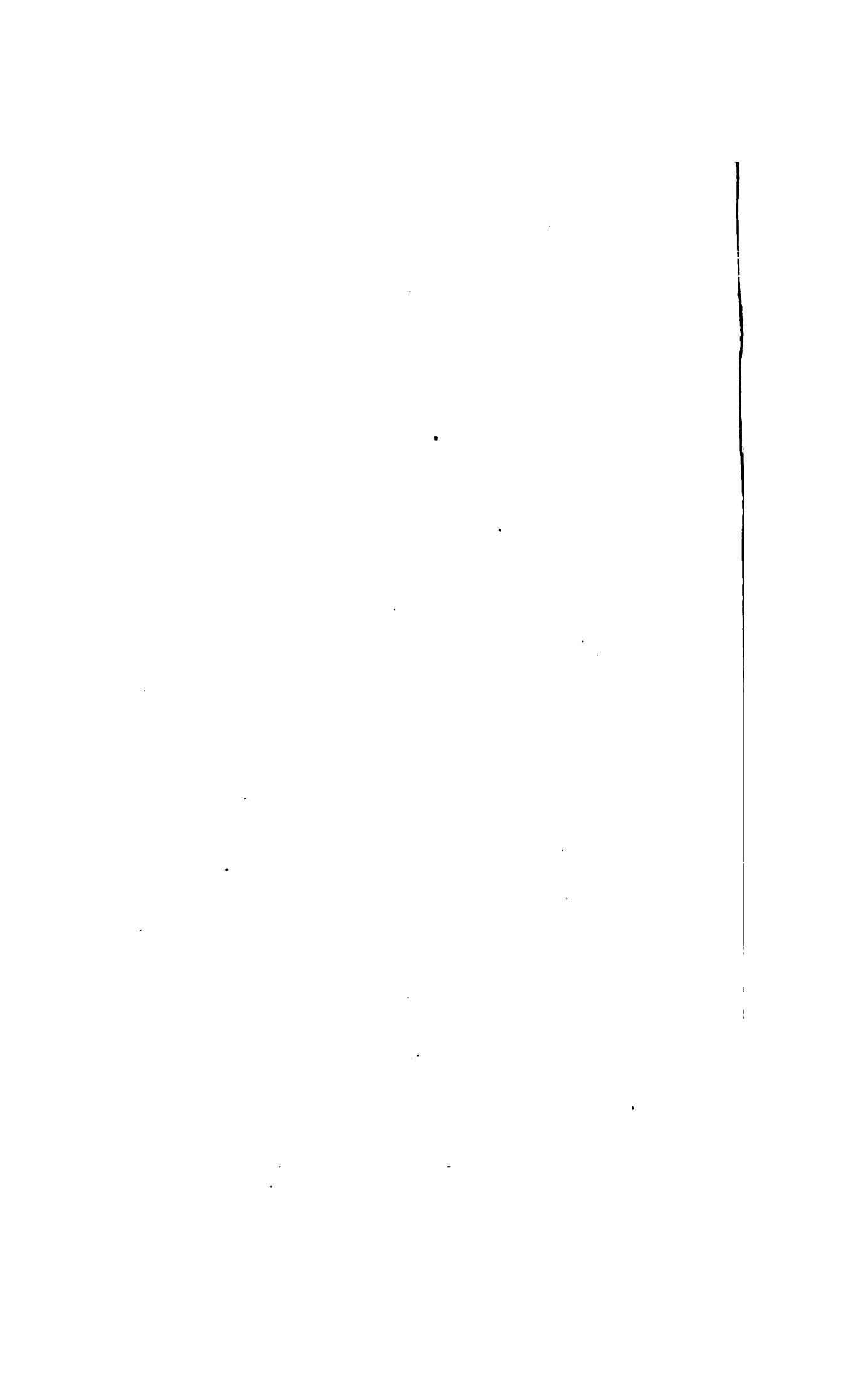
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MERCHANT OF VENICE.



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Duke of Venice.

Prince of Morocco, } *Suitors to PORTIA.*

Prince of Arragon, }

ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his Friend.

SALANIO, }

SALARINO, } *Friends to ANTONIO and BASSANIO.*

GRATIANO, }

LORENZO, in love with JESSICA.

SHYLOCK, a Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his Friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant to SHYLOCK.

OLD GOBBO, Father to LAUNCELOT.

SALERIO, a Messenger from Venice.

LEONARDO, Servant to BASSANIO.

BALTHASAR, } *Servants to PORTIA.*

STEPHANO, }

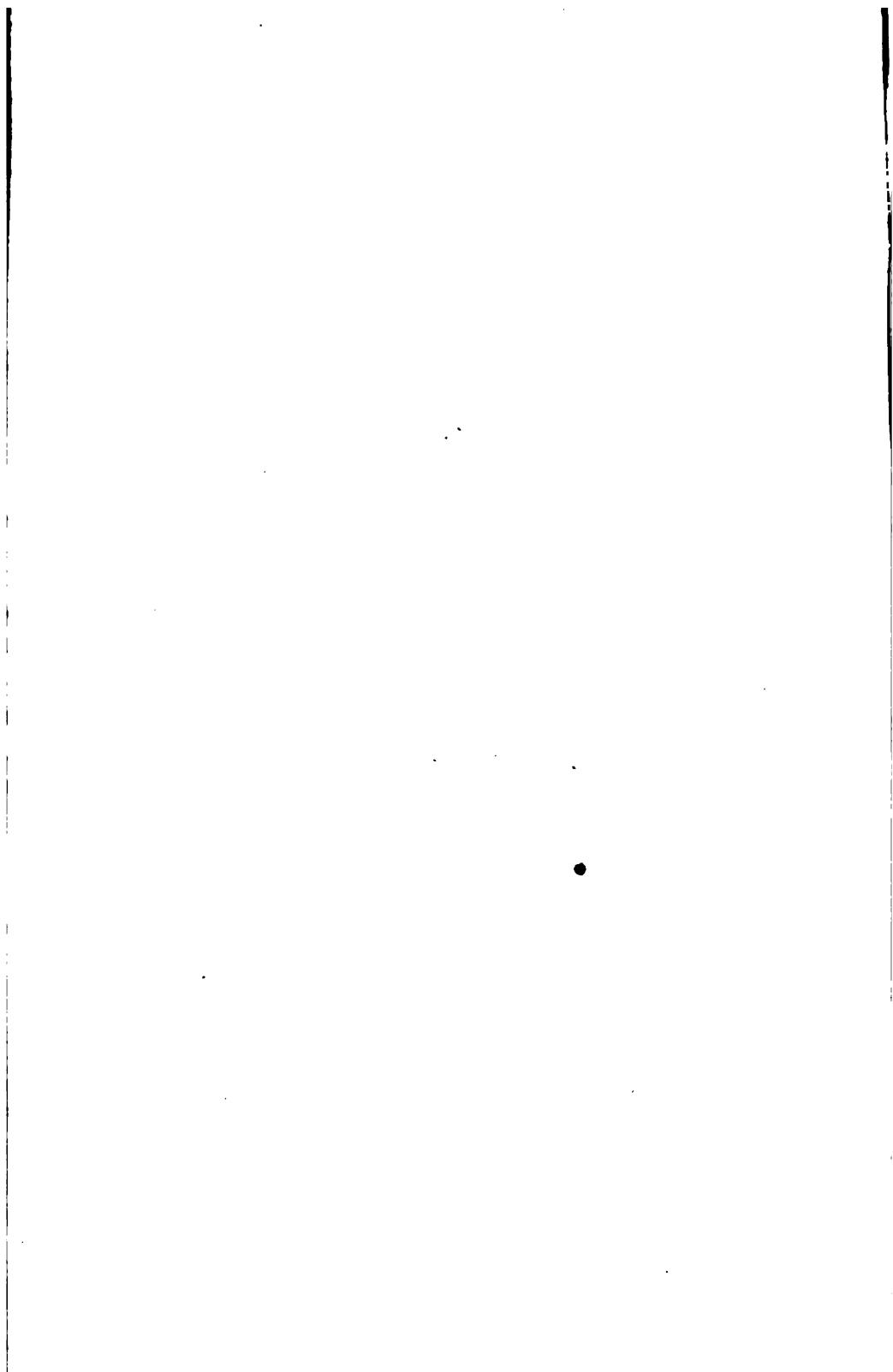
PORTIA, a rich Heiress.

NERISSA, her Waiting-maid.

JESSICA, Daughter to SHYLOCK.

*Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice,
Jailer, Servants, and other attendants.*

*SCENE, partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the
Seat of PORTIA, on the Continent.*





MERCHANT OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Venice. A Street.*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad ;
It wearies me ; you say, it wearies you ;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn ;

vol. XII.

A

And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,—
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,
Or, as it were the pageants of the sea,—
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind ;
Peering in maps, for ports, and piers, and roads ;
And every object, that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,
Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats ;
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs,
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks ?
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream ;
Enrobe the rolling waters with my silks ;
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing ? Shall I have the thought

To think on this; and shall I lack the thought,
That such a thing, bechanc'd, would make me sad?
But, tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandize.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore, my merchandize makes me not sad.

Salan. Why then you are in love.

Ant. Fye, fye!

Salan. Not in love neither? Then let's say, you are
sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you, to laugh, to leap, and say, you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some, that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh, like parrots, at a bag piper;
And other of such vinegar aspéct,
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kins-
man,

Gratiano, and Lorenzo: Fare you well;
We leave you now with better company.

Salar. I would have staid till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you,

And you embrace the occasion to depart.

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say, when?

You grow exceeding strange: Must it be so?

Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt SALARINO and SALANIO.*

Lor. My lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

We two will leave you: but, at dinner time,

I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:

They lose it, that do buy it with much care.

Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage, where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

Gra. Let me play the fool:

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;

And let my liver rather heat with wine,

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.

Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

Sleep, when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—

I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;—

There are a sort of men, whose visages

Do cream and mantle, like a standing pond;

And do a wilful stillness entertain,

With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion

Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit ;
As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark !
O, my Antonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing ; who, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers, fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time :
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion.—
Come, good Lorenzo :—Fare ye well, a while ;
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time :
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell : I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gra. Thanks, i'faith ; for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.

[*Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO.*

Ant. Is that any thing now ?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing,
more than any man in all Venice : His reasons are as
two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff ; you
shall seek all day ere you find them ; and, when you
have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well ; tell me now, what lady is this same,
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of ?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is, to come fairly off from the great debts,
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged: To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money, and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots, and purposes,
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And, if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assur'd,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth; and by advent'ring both,
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,
That, which I owe, is lost: but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well: and herein spend but time,

To wind about my love with circumstance;
And, out of doubt, you do me now more wrong,
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do,
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
Of wond'rous virtues; sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors: and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont, Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate.

Ant. Thou know'st, that all my fortunes are at sea;
Nor have I money, nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth,
Try what my credit can in Venice do;
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make,
To have it of my trust, or for my sake. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A room in PORTIA's house.*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: And, yet, for aught I see, they are as sick, that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing: It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean; superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences, and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages, princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood; but a hot temper leaps over a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband:— O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father:— Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men, at their death, have good inspirations; therefore, the

lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests, of gold, silver, and lead, (whereof who chooses his meaning, chooses you,) will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt, indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself: I am much afraid, my lady his mother played false with a smith.

Ner. Then, there is the county Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, *An if you will not have me, choose:* he hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear, he will prove the weeping philosopher, when he grows old, being so full of unmanly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth, than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker; But, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the count Palatine: he is every man in no man: if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering; he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty

husbands : If he would despise me, I would forgive him ;
for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you then to Faulconbridge, the young
baron of England ?

Por. You know, I say nothing to him ; for he un-
derstands not me, nor I him : he hath neither Latin,
French, nor Italian ; and you will come into the court
and swear, that I have a poor pennyworth in the Eng-
lish. He is a proper man's picture ; But, alas ! who
can converse with a dumb show ? How oddly he is suit-
ed ! I think, he bought his doublet in Italy, his round
hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his beha-
viour every where.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neigh-
bour ?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him ; for
he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and
swore he would pay him again, when he was able : I
think, the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed
under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the duke of
Saxony's nephew ?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober ;
and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk :
when he is best, he is a little worse than a man ; and
when he is worst, he is little better than a beast : an the
worst fall that ever fell, I hope, I shall make shift to
go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the
right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's
will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set
a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket :

for, if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords; they have acquainted me with their determinations: which is indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit; unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will: I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, so was he called.

Ner. True, madam; he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.—How now! what news?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a fore-runner come from a fifth, the prince of Morocco; who brings word, the prince, his master, will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good

heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint, and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrieve me than wive me. Come, Nerissa,—Sirrah, go before.—Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—*Venice. A public place.*

Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK.

Shy. Three thousand ducats,—well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months,—well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound,—well.

Bass. May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats, for three months, and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Ho, no, no, no, no;—my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me, that he is sufficient: yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England,—and other ventures he hath, squander'd abroad: But ships are but

boards, sailors but men : there be land-rats, and water-rats, water-thieves, and land-thieves ; I mean, pirates ; and then, there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks : The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient ;—three thousand ducats ;—I think, I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured, I may ; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me : May I speak with Antonio ?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork ; to eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into : I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following ; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto ?—Who is he comes here ?

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is signior Antonio.

Shy. [Aside.] How like a fawning publican he looks !
I hate him, for he is a christian :
But more, for that, in low simplicity,
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation ; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest : Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him !

Bass. Shylock, do you hear ?

Shy. I am debating of my present store ;

And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats: What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me: But soft; How many months
Do you desire?—Rest you fair, good signior;

[To ANTONIO.]

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant. Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow,
By taking, nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom:—Is he yet possess'd,
How much you would?

Sky. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Sky. I had forgot,—three months, you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and, let me see,—But hear
you;
Methought, you said, you neither lend, nor borrow,
Upon advantage.

Ant. I do never use it.

Sky. When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep,
This Jacob from our holy Abraham was
(As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,)
The third possessor; ay, he was the third.—

Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?

Sky. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromis'd,
That all the eanlings which were streak'd, and pied,
Should fall as Jacob's hire; the ewes, being rank,
In the end of autumn turned to the rams:

And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands,
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes ;
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
Fall party-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest ;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd for ;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd, and fashion'd, by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good ?
Or is your gold and silver, ewes and rams ?

Shy. I cannot tell ; I make it breed as fast :—
But note me, signior.

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul, producing holy witness,
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek ;
A goodly apple rotten at the heart ;
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath !

Shy. Three thousand ducats,—'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve, then let me see the rate.

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholden to you ?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my monies, and my usances :
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug ;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe :
You call me—misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that, which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears, you need my help :
Go to then ; you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have monies ; You say so ;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold ; monies is your suit.
What should I say to you ? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money ? is it possible,
A cur can lend three thousand ducats ? or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With 'bated breath, and whispering humbleness,
Say this,—
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last ;
You spurn'd me such a day ; another time
You call'd me—dog ; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies.

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends ; (for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend ?)
But lend it rather to thine enemy ;
Who if he break, thou may'st with better face
Exact the penalty.

Shy. Why, look you, how you storm !
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit
Of usance for my monies, and you'll not hear me :
This is kind I offer.

Ant. This were kindness.

Shy. This kindness will I show :—
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum, or sums, as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Ant. Content, in faith ; I'll seal to such a bond,
And say, there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me,
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Ant. Why, fear not, man ; I will not forfeit it ;
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. O father Abraham, what these Christians are ;
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others ! Pray you, tell me this ;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture ?
A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship :
If he will take it, so ; if not, adieu ;
And, for my love, I pray you, wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's ;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight ;

See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave; and presently
I will be with you.

[Exit.]

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew.
This Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

Bass. I like not fair terms, and a villain's mind.

Ant. Come on; in this there can be no dismay,
My ships come home a month before the day.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Belmont. A room in PORTIA's house.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco, and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and other of her attendants.

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion;
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his, or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspēct of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant; by my love, I swear,
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have lov'd it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes:
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But, if my father had not scanted me,
And hedg'd me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife, who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair,
As any comer I have look'd on yet,
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you ;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
To try my fortune. By this scimitar,—
That slew the Sophy, and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of Sultan Solymán,—
I would out-stare the sternest eyes that look,
Out-brave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady : But, alas the while !
If Hercules, and Lichas, play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand :
So is Alcides beaten by his page ;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that, which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance ;
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear, before you choose,—if you choose wrong,
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage ; therefore be advis'd.

Mor. Nor will not; come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple ; after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then ! [Corns.
To make me bless't, or cursed'st among men.

[Exeunt,

SCENE II.—*Venice.* A street.

Enter LAUNCELOT GOBBO.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew, my master: The fiend is at mine elbow; and tempts me, saying to me, *Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away:* My conscience says,—no; *take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo; or, as aforesaid, honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels:* Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack; *via!* says the fiend; *away!* says the fiend, *for the heavens; rouse up a brave mind,* says the fiend, *and run.* Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me,—*my honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,—or rather an honest woman's son;*—for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—well, my conscience says, *Launcelot, budge not; budge,* says the fiend; *budge not,* says my conscience: Conscience, say I, you counsel well; fiend, say I, you counsel well: to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, (God bless the mark!) is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself: Certainly, the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew:

The fiend gives the more friendly counsel : I will run,
fiend ; my heels are at your commandment, I will run.

Enter old Gobbo, with a basket.

Gob. Master, young man, you, I pray you ; which
is the way to master Jew's ?

Laun. [Aside.] O heavens, this is my true begotten
father ! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel
blind, knows me not :—I will try conclusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is
the way to master Jew's ?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand, at the next turn-
ing, but, at the next turning of all, on your left ; mar-
ry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn
down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonries, 'twill be a hard way to hit.
Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells
with him, dwell with him, or no ?

Laun. Talk you of young master Launcelot ?—Mark
me now ; [aside.] now will I raise the waters :—Talk
you of young master Launcelot ?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son ; his fa-
ther, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man,
and, God be thanked, well to live.

Laun. Well, let his father be what he will, we talk
of young master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech
you ; Talk you of young master Launcelot ?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. *Ergo*, master Launcelot ; talk not of master
Launcelot, father ; for the young gentleman (accord-

ing to fates and destinies, and such odd sayings, the sisters three, and such branches of learning,) is, indeed, deceased ; or, as you would say, in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid ! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel, or a hovel-post, a staff, or a prop ?—Do you know me, father ?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman : but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, (God rest his soul !) alive, or dead ?

Laun. Do you not know me, father ?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind, I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me : it is a wise father, that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son : Give me your blessing : truth will come to light ; murder cannot be hid long, a man's son may ; but, in the end, truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up ; I am sure, you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing ; I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think, you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that : but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man ; and, I am sure, Margery, your wife, is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed : I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be ! what a beard hast thou got ! thou hast got more hair on thy chin, than Dobbin my thill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward ; I am sure he had more hair on his tail, than I have on my face, when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed ! How dost thou and thy master agree ? I have brought him a present ; How 'gree you now ?

Laun. Well, well ; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground : my master's a very Jew ; Give him a present ! give him a halter : I am famish'd in his service ; You may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come ; give me your present to one Mr Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries ; if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground.—O rare fortune ! here comes the man ;—to him, father ; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO, and other followers.

Bass. You may do so ;—but let it be so hasted, that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock : See these letters deliver'd ; put the liveries to making ; and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit a servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship !

Bass. Gramercy ; Would'st thou aught with me ?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man ; that would, sir, as my father shall specify,—

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and I have a desire, as my father shall specify,—

Gob. His master and he, (saving your worship's reverence,) are scarce cater-cousins:—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is, that the Jew having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being I hope an old man, shall frutify unto you,—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves, that I would bestow upon your worship; and my suit is,—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet, poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both;—What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. This is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well, thou hast obtain'd thy suit: Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day, And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment, To leave a rich Jew's service, to become The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir; you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bass. Thou speak'st it well: Go, father, with thy son:—

Take leave of thy old master, and enquire
My lodging out:—Give him a livery

[*To his followers.*]

More guarded than his fellows: See it done.

Laun. Father, in:—I cannot get a service, no;—I have ne'er a tongue in my head.—Well; [looking on

his palm.] if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth offer to swear upon a book.—I shall have good fortune; Go to, here's a simple line of life! here's a small trifle of wives: Alas, fifteen wives is nothing; eleven widows, and nine maids, is a simple coming-in for one man: and then, to 'scape drowning thrice; and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed;—here are simple 'scapes! Well, if fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear.—Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [Exit LAUNCELOT and old GOBBO.

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this; These things being bought, and orderly bestow'd, Return in haste, for I do feast to-night My best-esteem'd acquaintance; hie thee, go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Where is your master?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [Exit LEONARDO.

Gra. Signior Bassanio,—

Bass. Gratiano!

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Gra. You must not deny me; I must go with you to Belmont.

Bass. Why, then you must;—But hear thee, Gratiano;

Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;—

Parts, that become thee happily enough,

And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;

But where thou art not known, why, there they show

Something too liberal ;—pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour,
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me :
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely ;
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say, amen ;
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gage
me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity ;
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends,
That purpose merriment : But fare you well,
I have some business.

Gra. And I must to Lorenzo, and the rest ;
But we will visit you at supper-time. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—*The same. A room in SHYLOCK's house.*

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT.

Jes. I am sorry, thou wilt leave my father so ;
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,

Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness :
But fare thee well ; there is a ducat for thee.
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :
Give him this letter ; do it secretly,
And so farewell ; I would not have my father
See me talk with thee.

Lor. Adieu !—tears exhibit my tongue.—
Most beautiful pagan,—most sweet Jew ! If a Christian
do not play the knave, and get thee, I am much
deceived : But, adieu ! these foolish drops do some-
what drown my manly spirit ; adieu ! [Exit.]

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot.—
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To be ashamed to be my father's child !
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners : O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife ;
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.—*The same. A street.*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away at supper-time ;
Disguise us at my lodging, and return
All in an hour.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd ;
And better, in my mind, not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock ; we have two hours
To furnish us :—

Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot, what's the news ?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it
shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand : in faith, 'tis a fair hand ;
And whiter than the paper, it writ on,
Is the fair hand, that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou ?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to
sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this :—tell gentle Jessica,
I will not fail her ;—speak it privately ; go.—

Gentlemen, [Exit LAUNCELOT.

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night ?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight,

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me, and Gratiano,
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so.

[Exit SALAR. and SALAN.]

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica ?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all : She hath directed,
How I shall take her from her father's house ;
What gold, and jewels, she is furnish'd with ;
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake :

And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,—
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me ; peruse this, as thou goest :
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [Exit.]

SCENE V.—*The same. Before SHYLOCK's house.*

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.

Sky. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy
judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio :
What, Jessica !—thou shalt not gormandize,
As thou hast done with me ;—What, Jessica !—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out ;—
Why, Jessica, I say !
Laun. Why, Jessica !
Sky. Who bids thee call ? I do not bid thee call.
Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me, I could do
nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA.

Jes. Call you ? What is your will ?
Sky. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica ;
There are my keys :—But wherefore should I go ?
I am not bid for love ; they flatter me :
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian.—Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house :—I am right loath to go ;
There is some ill a brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go ; my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. And they have conspired together,—I will not say, you shall see a masque ; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a bleeding on Black-Monday last, at six o'clock i'the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon.

Shy. What ! are there masques ? Hear you me, Jessica :

Lock up my doors ; and when you hear the drum,
And the vile squeaking of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the publick street,
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces :
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements ;
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house.—By Jacob's staff I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night :
But I will go.—Go you before me, sirrah ;
Say, I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir.—

Mistress, look out at a window, for all this ;

There will come a Christian by,

Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [Exit LAUN.]

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha !

Jes. His words were, Farewell, mistress ; nothing else.

Shy. The patch is kind enough ; but a huge feeder,
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat ; drones hive not with me ;

Therefore I part with him ; and part with him
To one, that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse.—Well, Jessica, go in :
Perhaps, I will return immediately ;
Do, as I bid you,
Shut doors after you : Fast bind, fast find ;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit.
Jes. Farewell ; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit.

SCENE VI.—*The same.*

Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued.

Gra. This is the pent-house, under which Lorenzo
Desir'd us to make stand.

Salar. His hour is almost past.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new made, than they are wont,
To keep obliged faith unforfeited !

Gra. That ever holds : Who riseth from a feast,
With that keen appetite that he sits down ?
Where is the horse, that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire,
That he did pace them first ? All things, that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younker, or a prodigal,
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind !
How like the prodigal doth she return ;

With over-weather'd ribs, and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

Enter LORENZO.

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo ;—more of this hereafter.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode ;

Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait ;
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then.—Approach ;
Here dwells my father Jew :—Ho ! who's within ?

Enter JESSICA above, in boy's clothes.

Jes. Who are you ? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear, that I do know your tongue.

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain ; and my love, indeed ;
For who love I so much ? And now who knows,
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours ?

Lor. Heaven, and thy thoughts, are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket ; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange :
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies, that themselves commit ;
For, if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames ?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.

Gra. Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love ;
And I should be obscur'd.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once ;
For the close night doth play the run-away,
And we are staid for at Bassanio's feast.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[Exit, from above.]

Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile, and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me, but I love her heartily :
For she is wise, if I can judge of her ;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true ;
And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself ;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, below.

What, art thou come !—On, gentlemen, away ;
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[Exit with JESSICA and SALARINO.]

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Who's there ?

Gra. Signior Antonio ?

Ant. Fye, fye, Gratiano ! where are all the rest ?
'Tis nine o'clock ; our friends all stay for you :—
No masque to-night ; the wind is come about,
Bassanio presently will go aboard :
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on't; I desire no more delight,
Than to be under sail, and gone to-night. [Excunt.]

SCENE VII.—*Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the Prince of Morocco, with both their trains.

Por. Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince :—
Now make your choice.

Mor. The first of gold, who this inscription bears ;—
Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.
The second, silver, which this promise carries ;—
Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.
The third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt ;—
Who chooseth me, shall give and hazard all he hath.
How shall I know if I do choose the right ?

Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince ;
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Mor. Some god direct my judgment ! Let me see,
I will survey the inscriptions back again :
What says this leaden casket ?
Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath.
Must give—For what ? for lead ? hazard for lead ?
This casket threatens : Men, that hazard all,
Do it in hope of fair advantages :
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross ;
I'll then nor give, nor hazard, aught for lead.
What says the silver, with her virgin hue ?
Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.
As much as he deserves ?—Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand :
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough ; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady ;

And yet to be afeard of my deserving,
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve!—Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?—
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:
Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her:
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts, and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia, are as through-fares now,
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watry kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like, that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation,
To think so base a thought; it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think, in silver she's immur'd,
Being ten times undervalued to try'd gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin, that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold; but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within.—Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince, and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [He unlocks the golden casket.

Mor. O hell ! what have we here ?
A carrion death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll ? I'll read the writing.

*All that glisters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told :
Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold :
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscrol'd :
Fare you well ; your suit is cold.*

Cold, indeed ; and labour lost :
Then, farewell, heat ; and, welcome, frost.—
Portia, adieu ! I have too griev'd a heart
To take a tedious leave : thus losers part. [Exit.
Por. A gentle riddance :—Draw the curtains,
go ;—
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exit.

SCENE VIII.—*Venice. A Street.*

Enter SALARINO and SALANIO.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail ;
With him is Gratiano gone along ;
And in their ship, I am sure, Lorenzo is not.

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the duke ;
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail :
But there the duke was given to understand,
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica :
Besides, Antonio certify'd the duke,
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Salan. I never heard a passion so confus'd,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets :
My daughter!—O my ducats!—O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian?—O my christian ducats!—
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Oj double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels; two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stol'n by my daughter!—Justice! find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying,—his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd :
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday ;
Who told me,—in the narrow seas, that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country, richly fraught :
I thought upon Antonio, when he told me ;
And wish'd in silence, that it were not his.

Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear ;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part :

Bassanio told him, he would make some speed
Of his return ; he answer'd—*Do not so,*
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time ;
And for the Jew's bond, which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love :
Be merry ; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there :
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted.

Salan. I think, he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go, and find him out,
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX.—*Belnont. A room in PORTIA's house.*

Enter NERISSA, with a servant.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee, draw the curtain
straight.
The prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of Cornets. *Enter the Prince of Arragon, POR-*
TIA, and their trains.

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince :
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,

Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemniz'd;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage; lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear,
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Ar. And so have I address'd me: Fortune now
To my heart's hope!—Gold, silver, and base lead.
Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath:
You shall look fairer, ere I give, or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.
What many men desire.—That many may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves;
And well said too; For who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable?

Without the stamp of merit ! Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not deriv'd corruptly ! and that clear honour
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer !
How many then should cover, that stand bare ?
How many be commanded, that command ?
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour ? and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
To be new varnish'd ? Well, but to my choice :
Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves :
I will assume desert :—Give me the key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

Por. Too long a pause for that, which you find there.

Ar. What's here ? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule ? I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia ?
How much unlike my hopes, and my deservings ?
Who chooseth me, shall have as much as he deserves.
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head ?
Is that my prize ? are my deserts no better ?

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices,
And of opposed natures:

Ar. What is here ?

*The fire seven times tried this ;
Seven times tried that judgment is,
That did never choose amiss :
Some there be, that shadows kiss ;
Such have but a shadow's bliss :
There be fools alive, I wis,*

*Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head :
So begone, sir, you are sped.*

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here :
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.—
Sweet, adieu ! I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon, and train.*]

Por. Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.
O these deliberate fools ! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy ;—
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Lady.

Serv. Where is my lady ?
Por. Here ; what would my lord ?
Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one, that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord :
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets ;
To wit, besides commends, and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value ; yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love :
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee; I am half afeard,
Thou wilt say anon, he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit, in praising him.—
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post, that comes so mannerly.

Ner. Bassanio, lord love, if thy will it be!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Venice. A Street.**Enter SALANIO and SALARINO.**Salan.* Now, what news on the Rialto?*Salar.* Why, yet it lives there unchecked, that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word.*Salan.* I would she were as lying a gossip in that, as ever knapp'd ginger, or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband: But it is true,—without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain high-way of talk,—that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—*Salar.* Come, the full stop.*Salan.* Ha,—what say'st thou?—Why the end is, he hath lost a ship.*Salar.* I would it might prove the end of his losses!*Salan.* Let me say amen betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.—

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock? what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor, that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damn'd for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salan. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers, than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods, than there is between red wine and rhenish:—But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto;—a beggar, that used to come so snug upon the mart;—let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer;—let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy;—let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh; What's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and

hindered me of half a million ; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies ; and what's his reason ? I am a Jew : Hath not a Jew eyes ? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is ? if you prick us, do we not bleed ? if you tickle us, do we not laugh ? if you poison us, do we not die ? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge ? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility ? revenge : If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example ? why, revenge. The villainy, you teach me, I will execute ; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe ; a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt SALAN. SALAR. and Servant.*

Shy. How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa ? hast thou found my daughter ?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why there, there, there, there ! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort ! The curse never fell upon our nation till now ; I never felt it till now :—two thousand ducats in that ; and other precious, precious jewels.—I would, my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear ! 'would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin ! No news of them ?—Why so :—and I know not what's spent in the search : Why, thou loss upon loss ! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief ; and no satisfaction, no revenge : nor no ill luck stirring, but what lights o' my shoulders ; no sighs, but o' my breathing ; no tears, but o' my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too ; Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what ? ill luck, ill luck ?

Tub. —hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God :—Is it true ? is it true ?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal ;—Good news, good news : ha ! ha !—Where ? in Genoa !

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night, fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stick'st a dagger in me :—I shall never see my gold again : Fourscore ducats at a sitting ! fourscore ducats !

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him; I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring, that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturtest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah, when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkies.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true: Go, Tubal, fee me an officer, bespeak him a fortnight before: I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandize I will: Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [Exit].

SCENE II.—*Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and Attendants. The caskets are set out.

Por. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two,
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company; therefore, forbear a while:
There's something tells me, (but it is not love)
I would not lose you: and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality:
But, lest you should not understand me well,
(And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought)
I would detain you here some month or two,
Before you venture for me. I could teach you,
How to choose right, but then I am forsown;

So will I never be : so may you miss me ;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsown. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'er-look'd me, and divided me ;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,—
Mine own I would say ; but, if mine, then yours,
And so all yours : O ! these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights ;
And so, though yours, not yours.—Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long ; but 'tis to peize the time ;
To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose ;
For, as I am, I live upon the rack.

Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio ? then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bass. None, but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love :
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Por. Ay, but, I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak any thing.

Bass. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Por. Well, then, confess, and live.

Bass. Confess, and love,
Had been the very sum of my confession :
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance !
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Por. Away, then : I am locked in one of them ;
If you do love me, you will find me out.—

Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof.—
 Let musick sound, while he doth make his choice ;
 Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
 Fading in musick : that the comparison
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
 And wat'ry death-bed for him : He may win ;
 And what is musick, then ? then musick is
 Even as the flourish, when true subjects bow
 To a new-crowned monarch : such it is,
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
 With no less presence, but with much more love,
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
 To the sea-monster : I stand for sacrifice,
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With bleared visages, come forth to view
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules !
 Love thou, I live :—With much more dismay
 I view the fight, than thou that mak'st the fray.

[*Music, whilst Bas. comments on the caskets to himself.*

SONG.

1. *Tell me where is fancy bred,*
Or in the heart, or in the head ?
How begot, how nourished ?

Reply.

2. *It is engender'd in the eyes,*
With gazing fed ; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies :
Let us all ring fancy's knell ;

I'll begin it,—Ding dong, bell.
All. *Ding, dong, bell.*

Bass.—So may the outward shows be least themselves ;
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil ? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament ?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules, and frowning Mars ;
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk ?
And these assume but valour's excrement,
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight ;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest, that wear most of it :
So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The scull that bred them, in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty ; in a word,
The seeming truth, which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,

Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee :
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man : but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threat'nest, than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I ; Joy be the consequence !

Por. How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy.
O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstacy,
In measure rain thy joy, scant this excess ;
I feel too much thy blessing, make it less,
For fear I surfeit !

Bass. What find I here ? [Opening the leaden casket.]
Fair Portia's counterfeit ? What demi-god
Hath come so near creation ! Move these eyes ?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion ? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar-breath ; so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends : Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider ; and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs : But her eyes,—
How could he see to do them ? having made one,
Methinks, it should have power to steal both his,
And leave itself unfurnish'd : Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance.—Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

*You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair, and choose as true !
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content, and seek no new.
If you be well pleas'd with this,
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss.*

A gentle scroll ;—Fair lady, by your leave ;

[Kissing her.]

I come by note, to give, and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause, and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no ;
So, thrice fair lady, stand I even so ;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am : though, for myself alone,
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better ; yet, for you,
I would be trebled twenty times myself ;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich ;
That only to stand high on your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account : but the full sum of me
Is sum of something ; which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd :

Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn ; and happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn ;
Happiest of all, is, that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself, and what is mine, to you, and yours
Is now converted : but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself ; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself,
Are yours, my lord ; I give them with this ring ;
Which, when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins:
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude ;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd, and not express'd : But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence ;
O, then be bold to say, Bassanio's dead.

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by, and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy ; Good joy, my lord, and lady !

Gra. My lord Bassanio, and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish ;
For, I am sure, you can wish none from me :

And, when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship ; you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours :
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid ;
You lov'd, I lov'd ; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there ;
And so did mine too, as the matter falls :
For wooing here, until I sweat again ;
And swearing, till my very roof was dry,
With oaths of love ; at last,—if promise last,—
I got a promise of this fair one here,
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achiev'd her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa ?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith ?

Gra. Yes, 'faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your mar-
riage.

Gra. We'll play with them, the first boy for a thou-
sand ducats.

Ner. What, and stake down ?

Gra. No ; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake
down —

But who comes here ? Lorenzo, and his infidel ?
What, my old Venetian friend, Salerio ?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALERIO.

Bass. Lorenzo, and Salerio, welcome hither ;

If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome :—By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Por. So do I, my lord ;
They are entirely welcome.

Lor. I thank your honour :—For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here ;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Sale. I did, my lord,
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives BASSANIO a letter.]

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Sale. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind ;
Nor well, unless in mind : his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon' stranger ; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio ; What's the news from Venice ?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio ?
I know, he will be glad of our success ;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

Sale. 'Would you had won the fleece, that he hath
lost !

Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon' same
paper,
That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek :
Some dear friend dead ; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse ?—

With leave, Bassanio ; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of any thing,
That this same paper brings you.

Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words,
That ever blotted paper ! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman ;
And then I told you true : and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart : When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing ; for, indeed,
I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,
Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady ;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood.—But is it true, Salerio ?
Have all his ventures fail'd ? What, not one hit ?
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India ?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks ?

Sale. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it : Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man :
He plies the duke at morning, and at night :
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,

If they deny him justice : twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him ;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

Jes. When I was with him, I have heard him swear,
To Tubal, and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh,
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him : and I know, my lord,
If law, authority, and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Por. Is it your dear friend, that is thus in trouble ?

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies ; and one, in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears,
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew ?

Bass. For me, three thousand ducats.

Por. What, no more ?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond ;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall loose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First, go with me to church, and call me wife :
And then away to Venice to your friend ;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over ;
When it is paid, bring your true friend along :

My maid Nerissa, and myself, mean time,
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away :
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day :
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer ;
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.—
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [Reads.] *Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all mis-carried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit ; and since, in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death : notwithstanding, use your pleasure : if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.*

Por. O love, despatch all business, and be gone.

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste : but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

[*Excunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Venice. A Street.*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALANIO, ANTONIO, and Gaoler.

Shy. Gaoler, look to him ;—Tell not me of mercy ;—

This is the fool that lent out money gratis ;—
Gaoler, look to him.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond ; speak not against my bond ;
I have sworn an oath, that I will have my bond :
Thou call'dst me dog, before thou had'st a cause :

But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs :
The duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond ; I will not hear thee speak :
I'll have my bond ; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not ;
I'll have no speaking ; I will have my bond.

[Exit SHYLOCK.]

Salan. It is the most impenetrable cur,
That ever kept with men.

Ant. Let him alone ;
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life ; his reason well I know ;
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many, that have at times made moan to me :
Therefore he hates me.

Salan. I am sure, the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law ;
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state ;
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go :
These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.——

Well, gaoler, on : Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.—*Belmont. A Room in PORTIA's house.*

*Enter PORTIA, NECESSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and
BALTHAZAR.*

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity ; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But, if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know, you would be prouder of the work,
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now : for in companions,
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit ;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord : If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed,
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty ?
This comes to near the praising of myself ;
Therefore, no more of it : hear other things.—
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands

The husbandry and manage of my house,
Until my lord's return : for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow,
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return :
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide. I desire you,
Not to deny this imposition ;
The which my love, and some necessity,
Now lays upon you.

Lor. Madam, with all my heart ;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of lord Bassanio and myself.
So fare you well, till we shall meet again.

Lor. Fair thoughts, and happy words, attend on
you !

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you : fare you well, Jessica.

[*Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO.*]

Now, Balthazar,
As I have ever found thee honest, true,
So let me find thee still : Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man,
In speed to Padua ; see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, doctor Bellario ;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry,

Which trades to Venice :—waste no time in words,
But get thee gone ; I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

[Exit.]

Por. Come on, Nerissa ; I have work on hand,
That you yet know not of : we'll see our husbands,
Before they think of us.

Ner. Shall they see us ?

Por. They shall, Nerissa ; but, in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With what we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accouter'd like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace ;
And speak, between the change of man and boy,
With a reed voice ; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride ; and speak of frays,
Like a fine bragging youth : and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died ;
I could not do with all ;—then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them :
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear, I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth :—I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

Ner. Why, shall we turn to men ?

Por. Fye ! what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter ?
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us

At the park gate ; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The same. A Garden.*

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly :—for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children ; therefore, I promise you, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter : Therefore, be of good cheer ; for, truly, I think, you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good ; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

Jes. And what hope is that, I pray thee ?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jes. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed ; so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Laun. Truly, then I fear you are damned both by father and mother : thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother : well, you are gone both ways.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband ; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he : we were Christians enough before ; e'en as many as could well live, one by another : This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs ; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

Jes. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say ; here he comes.

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo ; Launcelot and I are out : he tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter : and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth ; for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

Lor. I shall answer that better to the commonwealth, than you can the getting up of the negro's belly : the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

Laun. It is much, that the Moor should be more than reason : but if she be less than an honest woman, she is, indeed, more than I took her for.

Lor. How every fool can play upon the word ! I think, the best grace of wit will turn into silence ; and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots.—Go in, sirrah ; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir ; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly lord, what a wit-snapper are you ! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir ; only, cover is the word.

Lor. Will you cover then, sir ?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither ; I know my duty.

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion ! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant ?

I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning : go to thy fellows ; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Lau. For the table, sir, it shall be served in ; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered ; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [Exit LAUNCELOT.

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited !
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words : And I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica ?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the lord Bassanio's wife ?
Jes. Past all expressing : It is very meet,
The lord Bassanio live an upright life ;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth ;
And, if on earth he do not mean it, it
Is reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other ; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.
Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me, as she is for a wife.
Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.
Lor. I will anon ; first, let us go to dinner.
Jes. Nay, let me praise you, while I have a stomach.

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jas. Well, I'll set you forth. [Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Venice. A Court of Justice.*

*Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes; ANTONIO, BASSANIO,
GRATIANO, SALARINO, SALANIO, and others.*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee ; thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Ant. I have heard,
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course ; but since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury ; and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Salan. He's ready at the door : he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice,
To the last hour of act ; and then, 'tis thought,
Thou'l't show thy mercy, and remorse, more strange

Than is thy strange apparent cruelty :
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
(Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,)
Thou wilt not only lose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal ;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back ;
Enough to press a royal merchant down,
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms, and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks, and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Sky. I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose ;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn,
To have the due and forfeit of my bond :
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter, and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh, than to receive
Three thousand ducats : I'll not answer that :
But, say, it is my humour : Is it answer'd ?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleas'd to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned ? What, are you answer'd yet ?
Some men there are, love not a gaping pig ;
Some, that are mad, if they behold a cat ;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain their urine ; For affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes, or loaths : Now, for your answer :

As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;
Why he, a swollen bag-pipe ; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame,
As to offend, himself being offended ;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodg'd hate, and a certain loathing,
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd ?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

Bass. Do all men kill the things, they do not love ?

Shy. Hates any man the thing, he would not kill ?

Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, would'st thou have a serpent sting thee
twice ?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew :
You may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main flood bate his usual height ;
You may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven ;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that (than which what's harder ?)
His Jewish heart :—Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But, with all brief and plain conveniency,
Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them, I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring
none?

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them:—Shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer,
The slaves are ours:—So do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it:
If you deny me, fy upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice:
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Salar. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; Call the messenger.

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man! courage
yet!

The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,

Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death ; the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me :
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario ?

Ner. From both my lord : Bellario greets your grace.
[Presents a letter.

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly ?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen : but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's ax, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee ?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog !

And for thy life let justice be accus'd.

Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,

To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men : thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infus'd itself in thee ; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd, and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou can'st rail the seal from off my bond,

Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud :

Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall

To cureless ruin.—I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth command
A young and learned doctor to our court:—
Where is he?

Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart:—some three or four of
you,
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.—
Mean time, the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

[Clerk reads.] *Your grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter, I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome, his name is Balthasar: I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, better'd with his own learning, (the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend,) comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.*

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.—

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws.
Give me your hand: Came you from old Bellario?
Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome : take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference,
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow ;
Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you, as you do proceed.—
You stand within his danger, do you not ?

[To ANTONIO.]

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond ?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I ? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd ;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown :
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation : we do pray for mercy ;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much,
To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head ! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money ?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court ;
Yea, twice the sum : if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart :
If this will not suffice, it must appear,
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority :
To do a great right, do a little wrong ;
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be ; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established :
'Twill be recorded for a precedent ;
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state : it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment ! yea, a Daniel !—
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee !

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven :
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?

No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart:—Be merciful;
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.—
It doth appear, you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Por. Why then, thus it is.
You must prepare your bosom for his knife:

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Por. Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond;—Doth it not, noble judge?—
Nearest his heart, those are the very words.

Por. It is so. Are there balance here, to weigh
The flesh?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,

To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Sky. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so express'd; But what of that?

Twere good you do so much for charity.

Sky. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

Por. Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Ant. But little; I am arm'd, and well prepar'd.—

Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well!

Grieve not, that I am fallen to this for you;

For herein fortune shows herself more kind

Than is her custom: it is still her use,

To let the wretched man out-live his wealth,

To view with hollow eye, and wrinkled brow,

An age of poverty; from which lingering penance

Of such a misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:

Tell her the process of Antonio's end,

Say, how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death;

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge,

Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent not you, that you shall lose your friend,

And he repents not, that he pays your debt;

For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,

I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife,

Which is as dear to me as life itself;

But life itself, my wife, and all the world,

Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:

I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all

Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love :
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back ;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. These be the Christian husbands : I have a
daughter ;
'Would, any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband, rather than a Christian !

[*Aside.*]

We trifle time ; I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine ;
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shy. Most rightful judge !

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast ;
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge !—A sentence ; come, pre-
pare.

Por. Tarry a little ;—there is something else.—
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood ;
The words expressly are, a pound of flesh :
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh ;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge !—Mark, Jew ;—O learned
judge !

Shy. Is that the law ?

Por. Thyself shalt see the act :
For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd,
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

Gra. O learned judge!—Mark, Jew;—a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer then;—pay the bond thrice, And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft; The Jew shall have all justice;—soft!—no haste;— He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh. Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more, But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak'st more, Or less, than a just pound,—be it but so much As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance, Or the division of the twentieth part Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn But in the estimation of a hair,— Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew! Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refus'd it in the open court; He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I; a second Daniel!— I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shy. Why then the devil give him good of it! I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew;
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,—
If it be prov'd against an alien,
That by direct, or indirect attempts,
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party, 'gainst the which he doth contrive,
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st:
For it appears by manifest proceeding,
That, indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contriv'd against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. Beg, that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore, thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop,

That doth sustain my house ; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio ?

Gra. A halter gratis ; nothing else, for God's sake.

Ant. So please my lord the duke, and all the court,
To quit the fine for one half of his goods ;
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use,—to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter :
Two things provided more,—That, for this favour,
He presently becomes a Christian ;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo, and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this ; or else I do recant
The pardon, that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew ? what dost thou say ?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence ;
I am not well ; send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. In christening thou shalt have two godfathers ;
Had I been judge, thou should'st have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

[Exit SHYLOCK.]

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon ;
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet, I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry, that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman ;
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke, Magnificoes, and Train.*

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties ; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

Por. He is well paid; that is well satisfied ;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid ;
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me, when we meet again ;
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further ;
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee : grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake ;
And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you :—
Do not draw back your hand ; I'll take no more ;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bass. This ring, good sir,—alas, it is a trifle ;
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this ;
And now, methinks, I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this, than on the
value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation ;
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers :
You taught me first to beg ; and now, methinks,
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife ;
And, when she put it on, she made me vow,
That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad woman,
And know how well I have deserv'd this ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you !

[*Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA.*]

Ant. My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring ;
Let his deservings, and my love withal,
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandement.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him,
Give him the ring ; and bring him, if thou can'st,
Unto Antonio's house :—away, make haste.

[*Exit GRATIANO.*]

Come, you and I will thither presently ;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont : Come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The same. A Street.*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,
And let him sign it ; we'll away to-night,

And be a day before our husbands home :
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well overtaken :
My lord Bassanio, upon more advice,
Hath sent you here this ring ; and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be :
This ring I do accept most thankfully,
And so, I pray you, tell him : Furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

Gra. That will I do.

Ner. Sir, I would speak with you :—
I'll see if I can get my husband's ring, [To PORTIA.
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Por. Thou may'st, I warrant; We shall have old
swearing,
That they did give the rings away to men ;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away, make haste ; thou know'st where I will tarry.

Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this
house ? [Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Belmont. Avenue to Portia's House.*

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lor. The moon shines bright:—In such a night as this,

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise; in such a night,
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul tow'rds the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes. In such a night,
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew;
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. In such a night,
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and wav'd her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night,
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs,
That did renew old Æson.

Lor. In such a night,
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew;
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice,
As far as Belmont.

Jes. And in such a night,
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well;

Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

Lor. And in such a night,
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come :
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night ?

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend ? what friend ? your name, I pray you,
friend ?

Steph. Stephano is my name ; and I bring word,
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont : she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lor. Who comes with her ?

Steph. None, but a holy hermit, and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd ?

Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola, wo ha, ho, sola, sola !

Lor. Who calls ?

Laun. Sola ! did you see master Lorenzo, and mis-
tress Lorenzo ! sola, sola !

Lor. Leave hollaing, man ; here.

Laun. Sola ! where ? where ?

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him, there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news; my master will be here ere morning. [Exit.]

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter;—Why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.—

[Exit STEPHANO.]

How sweet the moon-light sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness, and the night,
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica: Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.—

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn;
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

Jes. I am never merry, when I hear sweet music.

[Music.]

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,

Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood ;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music : Therefore, the poet
Did feign, that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods ;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature :
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus :
Let no such man be trusted.—Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NECESSA, at a distance.

Por. That light, we see, is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less :
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by ; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music ! hark !

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect ;
Methinks, it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended ; and, I think,
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise, and true perfection !—
Peace, hoa ! the moon sleeps with Endymion,
And would not be awak'd ! [*Music ceases.*]

Lor. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceiv'd, of Portia.

Por. He knows me, as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' wel-
fare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd ?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet ;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Por. Go in, Nerissa,
Give order to my servants, that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence ;—
Nor you, Lorenzo ;—Jessica, nor you.

[*A tucket sounds.*]

Lor. Your husband is at hand, I hear his trumpet :
We are no tell-tales, madam : fear you not.

Por. This night, methinks, is but the daylight sick,
It looks a little paler ; 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me;
But God sort all!—You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam: give welcome to my
friend.—

This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore, I scant this breathing courtesy.

[*GRATIANO and NECESSA seem to talk apart.*

Gra. By yonder moon, I swear, you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were gelt, that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

Por. A quarrel, ho, already? what's the matter?

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring,
That she did give me; whose posy was,
For all the world, like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, *Love me, and leave me not.*

Ner. What talk you of the posy, or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death;

And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective, and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk!—but well I know,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on his face, that had it.

Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,—
A kind of boy; a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee;
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
And riveted so with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief;
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

Bass. Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,
And swear, I lost the ring defending it. [Aside.]

Gra. My lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge, that begg'd it, and, indeed,
Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine:
And neither man, nor master, would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?

Ner. Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me ?

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see, my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.

Ner. Nor I in yours,
Till I again see mine.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When naught would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleas'd to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony ?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe ;
I'll die for't, but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begg'd the ring ; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away ;
Even he, that had held up the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforc'd to send it after him ;
I was beset with shame and courtesy ;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it : Pardon me, good lady ;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think, you would have begg'd
The ring of me, to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house :
Since he hath got the jewel, that I lov'd,
And that, which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you ;
I'll not deny him any thing I have,
No, not my body, nor my husband's bed :
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it :
Lie not a night from home; watch me, like Argus :
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

Ner. And I his clerk ; therefore be well advis'd,
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gra. Well, do you so : let not me take him then ;
For, if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you ; You are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong ;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself,——

Por. Mark you but that !
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself :

In each eye, one :—swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me :
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear,
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,

[To PORTIA.]

Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Por. Then you shall be his surety : Give him this ;
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Ant. Here, lord Bassanio ; swear to keep this ring.

Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor !

Por. I had it of him : pardon me, Bassanio ;
For by this ring the doctor lay with me.

Ner. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano ;
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this, last night did lie with me.

Gra. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough :
What ! are we cuckolds, ere we have deserv'd it ?

Por. Speak not so grossly.—You are all amaz'd :
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure ;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario :
There you shall find, that Portia was the doctor ;
Nerissa there, her clerk : Lorenzo here
Shall witness, I set forth as soon as you,
And but even now return'd ; I have not yet
Enter'd my house.—Antonio, you are welcome ;
And I have better news in store for you,

Than you expect : unseal this letter soon ;
There you shall find, three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly :
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.

Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor, and I knew you not ?

Gra. Were you the clerk, that is to make me cuckold ?

Ner. Ay ; but the clerk that never means to do it,
Unless he live until he be a man.

Bass. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow ;
When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life, and living ;
For here I read for certain, that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Por. How now, Lorenzo ?

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.—

There do I give to you, and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

Por. It is almost morning,
And yet, I am sure, you are not satisfied
Of these events at full : Let us go in ;
And charge us there upon intergatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

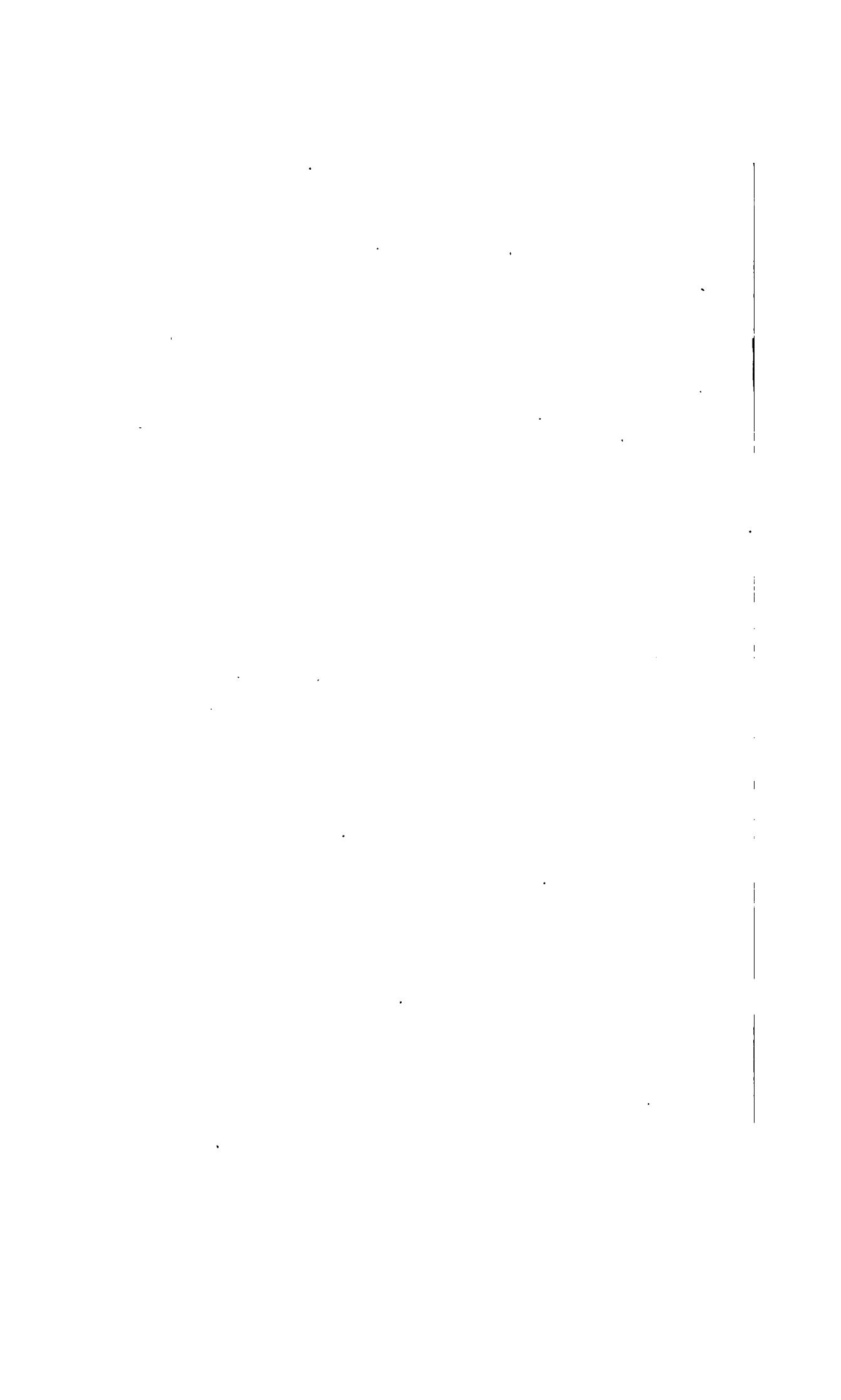
Gra. Let it be so : The first intergatory,
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on, is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay ;

Or go to bed now, being two hours to day :
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing
So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [Exit.]

ALL'S WELL

THAT

ENDS WELL.



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

King of France.

Duke of Florence.

BERTRAM, *Count of Rousillon.*

LAFEU, *an old Lord.*

PAROLLES, *a follower of Bertram.*

*Several young French Lords, that serve with Bertram in
the Florentine War.*

Steward, } *Servants to the Countess of Rousillon.*

Clown, } *Servants to the Countess of Rousillon.*

A Page.

Countess of Rousillon, Mother to Bertram.

HELENA, *a Gentlewoman protected by the Countess.*

An old Widow of Florence.

DIANA, *daughter to the Widow.*

VIOLANTA, } *Neighbours and Friends to the Widow.*

MARIANA, } *Neighbours and Friends to the Widow.*

*Lords, attending on the King ; Officers, Soldiers, &c.
French and Florentine.*

SCENE, *partly in France, and partly in Tuscany.*





ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Rousillon. A Room in the Countess's Palace,*

Enter BERTRAM, the Countess of Rousillon, HELENA, and LAFEU, in mourning.

Count. In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

Ber. And I, in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew: but I must attend his majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection.

Laf. You shall find of the king a husband, madam;—you, sir, a father: He, that so generally is at all times good, must of necessity hold his virtue to you; whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

Count. What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

Laf. He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope; and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

Count. This young gentlewoman had a father, (O, that *had!* how sad a passage 'tis!) whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. 'Would, for the king's sake, he were living! I think, it would be the death of the king's disease.

Laf. How called you the man you speak of, madam?

Count. He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon.

Laf. He was excellent, indeed, madam; the king very lately spoke of him, admiringly, and mournfully: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

Ber. What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

Laf. A fistula, my lord.

Ber. I heard not of it before.

Laf. I would, it were not notorious.—Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

Count. His sole child, my lord; and bequeathed to

my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good, that her education promises: her dispositions she inherits, which make fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity, they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty, and achieves her goodness.

Laf. Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

Count. 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart, but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena, go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow, than to have.

Hel. I do affect a sorrow, indeed, but I have it too.

Laf. Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy of the living.

Count. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.

Ber. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

Laf. How understand we that?

Count. Be thou blest, Bertram! and succeed thy father

In manners, as in shape! thy blood, and virtue,
Contend for empire in thee; and thy goodness
Share with thy birth-right! Love all, trust a few,
Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy
Rather in power, than use; and keep thy friend
Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence,
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,
That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down,

Fall on thy head ! Farewell.—My lord,
'Tis an unseason'd courtier ; good my lord,
Advise him.

Laf. He cannot want the best,
That shall attend his love.

Count. Heaven bless him !—Farewell, Bertram.

[*Exit Countess.*]

Ber. The best wishes, that can be forged in your thoughts, [To HELENA] be servants to you ! Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

Laf. Farewell, pretty lady : You must hold the credit of your father. [Exeunt BERTRAM and LAFEU.]

Hcl. O, were that all !—I think not on my father ;
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like ?
I have forgot him : my imagination
Carries no favour in it, but Bertram's.
I am undone ; there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. It were all one,
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it, he is so above me :
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself :
The hind, that would be mated by the lion,
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,
To see him every hour ; to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
In our heart's table ; heart, too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour :
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy

Must sanctify his relicks. Who comes here?

Enter PAROLLES.

One, that goes with him : I love him for his sake ;
And yet I know him a notorious liar,
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;
Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him,
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones
Look bleak in the cold wind : withal, full oft we see
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

Par. Save you, fair queen.

Hel. And you, monârch.

Par. No.

Hel. And no.

Par. Are you meditating on virginity ?

Hel. Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you ;
let me ask you a question : Man is enemy to virginity ;
how may we barricado it against him ?

Par. Keep him out.

Hel. But he assails ; and our virginity, though valiant in the defence, yet is weak : unfold to us some warlike resistance.

Par. There is none ; man, sitting down before you, will undermine you, and blow you up.

Hel. Bless our poor virginity from underminers, and blowers up !—Is there no military policy, how virgins might blow up men ?

Par. Virginity, being blown down, man will quicker be blown up : marry, in blowing him down again with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politick in the commonwealth of nature, to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational in-

crease ; and there was never virgin got, till virginity was first lost. That, you were made of, is metal to make virgins. Virginity, by being once lost, may be ten times found : by being ever kept, it is ever lost : 'tis too cold a companion ; away with it.

Hel. I will stand for't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

Par. There's little can be said in't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers ; which is most infallible disobedience. He, that hangs himself, is a virgin : virginity murders itself ; and should be buried in highways, out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese ; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not ; you cannot choose but lose by't : Out with't : within ten years it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase ; and the principal itself not much the worse : Away with't.

Hel. How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking ?

Par. Let me see : Marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying ; the longer kept, the less worth : off with't, while 'tis vendible : answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion ; richly suited, but unsuitable : just like the broach and tooth-pick, which wear not now : Your date is better in your pie and your porridge, than in your cheek : And your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of

our French wither'd pears ; it looks ill, it eats dryly ;
marry, 'tis a wither'd pear ; it was formerly better ;
marry, yet, 'tis a wither'd pear : Will you any thing
with it ?

Hel. Not my virginity yet.

There shall your master have a thousand loves,
A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,
A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear ;
His humble ambition, proud humility,
His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
His faith, his sweet disaster ; with a world
Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,
That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he—
I know not what he shall :—God send him well !—
The court's a learning-place ;—and he is one—

Par. What one, i'faith ?

Hel. That I wish well.—'Tis pity—

Par. What's pity ?

Hel. That wishing well had not a body in't,
Which might be felt : that we, the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
Might with effects of them follow our friends,
And show what we alone must think ; which never
Returns us thanks.

Enter a Page.

Page. Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

[*Exit Page.*

Par. Little Helen, farewell : if I can remember thee,
I will think of thee at court.

Hel. Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

Par. Under Mars, I.

Hel. I especially think, under Mars.

Par. Why under Mars?

Hel. The wars have so kept you under, that you must needs be born under Mars.

Par. When he was predominant.

Hel. When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

Par. Why think you so?

Hel. You go so much backward, when you fight.

Par. That's for advantage.

Hel. So is running away, when fear proposes the safety: But the composition, that your valour and fear makes in you, is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well.

Par. I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee acutely: I will return perfect courtier; in the which my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends: get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee: so farewell.

[*Exit.*]

Hel. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky
Gives us free scope; only, doth backward pull
Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull.
What power is it, which mounts my love so high;
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?

The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
To join like likes, and kiss like native things.
Impossible be strange attempts to those,
That weigh their pains in sense ; and do suppose,
What hath been cannot be : Who ever strove
To show her merit, that did miss her love ?
The king's disease—my project may deceive me,
But my intents are fixed, and will not leave me.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.—*Paris. A room in the king's palace.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the King of France, with letters; Lords and others attending.

King. The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears ;
Have fought with equal fortune, and continue
A braving war.

1 Lord. So 'tis reported, sir.

King. Nay, 'tis most credible ; we here receive it
A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,
With caution, that the Florentine will move us
For speedy aid ; wherein our dearest friend
Prejudicates the business, and would seem
To have us make denial.

1 Lord. His love and wisdom,
Approv'd so to your majesty, may plead
For amplest credence.

King. He hath arm'd our answer,
And Florence is denied before he comes :
Yet, for our gentlemen, that mean to see
The Tuscan service, freely they have leave

To stand on either part.

2 Lord. It may well serve
A nursery to our gentry, who are sick
For breathing and exploit.

King. What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES.

1 Lord. It is the count Rousillon, my good lord,
Young Bertram.

King. Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts
May'st thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

Ber. My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

King. I would I had that corporal soundness now,
As when thy father, and myself, in friendship
First tried our soldiership! He did look far
Into the service of the time, and was
Discipled of the bravest: he lasted long;
But on us both did haggish age steal on,
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me
To talk of your good father: In his youth
He had the wit, which I can well observe
To-day in our young lords; but they may jest,
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted,
Ere they can hide their levity in honour.
So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness
Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,
His equal had awak'd them; and his honour,
Clock to itself, knew the true minute, when
Exception bid him speak, and, at this time,
His tongue obey'd his hand: who were below him

He us'd as creatures of another place ;
And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,
Making them proud of his humility,
In their poor praise he humbled : Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times ;
Which, followed well, would démonstrate them now
But goers backward.

Ber. His good remembrance, sir,
Lies richer in your thoughts, than on his tomb ;
So in approof lives not his epitaph,
As in your royal speech.

King. 'Would, I were with him ! He would always
say,

(Methinks, I hear him now ; his plausive words
He scattered not in ears, but grafted them,
To grow there, and to bear,) — *Let me not live,* —
Thus his good melancholy oft began,
On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,
When it was out, — *let me not live*, quoth he,
After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain ; whose judgments are
Mere fathers of their garments ; whose constancies
Expire before their fashions : — This he wish'd :
I, after him, do after him wish too,
Since I nor wax, nor honey, can bring home,
I quickly were dissolved from my hive,
To give some labourers room.

2 Lord. You are loved, sir ;
They, that least lend it you, shall lack you first.

King. I fill a place, I know't. — How long is't, count,
Since the physician at your father's died ?

He was much fam'd.

Ber. Some six months since, my lord.

King. If he were living, I would try him yet;—
Lend me an arm;—the rest have worn me out
With several applications:—nature and sickness
Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count;
My son's no dearer.

Ber. Thank your majesty. [*Excunt. Flourish.*

SCENE III.—*Rousillon.—A room in the Countess's palace.*

Enter Countess, Steward, and Clown.

Count. I will now hear: what say you of this gentlewoman?

Stew. Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

Count. What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah: The complaints, I have heard of you, I do not all believe; 'tis my slowness, that I do not: for, I know, you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

Clo. 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

Count. Well, sir.

Clo. No, madam, 'tis not so well, that I am poor; though many of the rich are damn'd: But, if I may

have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

Count. Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

Clo. I do beg your good-will in this case.

Count. In what case?

Clo. In Isbel's case, and mine own. Service is no heritage: and, I think, I shall never have the blessing of God, till I have issue of my body; for, they say, bearns are blessings.

Count. Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

Clo. My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go, that the devil drives.

Count. Is this all your worship's reason?

Clo. Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

Count. May the world know them?

Clo. I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry, that I may repent.

Count. Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

Clo. I am out of friends, madam; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

Count. Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

Clo. You are shallow, madam; e'en great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me, which I am a-weary of. He, that ears my land, spares my team, and gives me leave to inn the crop: if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge: He, that comforts my wife, is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he, that cherishes my flesh and blood, loves my flesh and blood; he, that loves my flesh and blood, is my friend: *ergo*, he that kisses my

wife, is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage ; for young Charbon the puritan, and old Poysam the papist, howsoe'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one, they may joll horns together, like any deer i' the herd.

Count. Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave ?

Clo. A prophet I, madam ; and I speak the truth the next way :

*For I the ballad will repeat,
Which men full true shall find ;
Your marriage comes by destiny,
Your cuckoo sings by kind.*

Count. Get you gone, sir ; I'll talk with you more anon.

Stew. May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you ; of her I am to speak.

Count. Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman, I would speak with her ; Helen I mean.

Clo. *Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,* [Singing.
Why the Grecians sacked Troy ?
Fond done, done fond,
Why this king Priam's joy.
With that she sighed as she stood,
With that she sighed as she stood,
And gave this sentence then :
Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.

Count. What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

Clo. One good woman in ten, madam: which is a purifying o' the song: 'Would God would serve the world so all the year! we'd find no fault with the tythe-woman, if I were the parson: One in ten, quoth a'! an we might have a good woman born but every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well; a man may draw his heart out, ere he pluck one.

Count. You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you?

Clo. That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done!—Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart.—I am going, forsooth: the business is for Helen to come hither.

[*Exit.*]

Count. Well, now.

Stew. I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

Count. Faith, I do: her father bequeathed her to me; and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds: there is more owing her, than is paid; and more shall be paid her, than she'll demand.

Stew. Madam, I was very late more near her than, I think, she wished me: alone she was, and did communicate to herself, her own words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son; Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such

difference betwixt their two estates; Love, no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were level; Diana, no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight to be surprised, without rescue, in the first assault, or ransome afterward: This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow, that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in: which I held my duty, speedily to acquaint you withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it.

Count. You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself: many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance, that I could neither believe, nor misdoubt: Pray you, leave me: stall this in your bosom, and I thank you for your honest care: I will speak with you further anon.

[*Exit Steward.*]

Enter HELENA.

Count. Even so it was with me, when I was young:
If we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth:
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults;—or then we thought them none.
Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

Hel. What is your pleasure, madam?

Count. You know, Helen,
I am a mother to you.

Hel. Mine honourable mistress.

Count. Nay, a mother;

Why not a mother? When I said, a mother,
Methought you saw a serpent: What's in mother,
That you start at it? I say, I am your mother,
And put you in the catalogue of those,
That were enwombed mine: 'Tis often seen,
Adoption strives with nature; and choice breeds
A native slip to us from foreign seeds:
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,
Yet I express to you a mother's care:
God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood,
To say, I am thy mother? What's the matter,
That this distemper'd messenger of wet,
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?
Why?—that you are my daughter?

Hel. That I am not.

Count. I say, I am your mother.

Hel. Pardon, madam;

The count Rousillon cannot be my brother:
I am from humble, he from honour'd name;
No note upon my parents, his all noble:
My master, my dear lord he is; and I
His servant live, and will his vassal die:
He must not be my brother.

Count. Nor I your mother?

Hel. You are my mother, madam; 'Would you
were

(So that my lord, your son, were not my brother,)
Indeed my mother!—or were you both our mothers,
I care no more for, than I do for heaven,
So I were not his sister: Can't no other,
But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

Count. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law;

God shield, you mean it not! daughter, and mother,
So strive upon your pulse: What, pale again?
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: Now I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross,
You love my son; invention is ashamed,
Against the proclamation of thy passion,
To say, thou dost not: therefore tell me true;
But tell me then, 'tis so:—for, look, thy cheeks
Confess it, one to the other; and thine eyes
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours,
That in their kind they speak it; only sin
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,
That truth should be suspected: Speak, is't so?
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clue;
If it be not, forswear't: however, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
To tell me truly.

Hel. Good madam, pardon me!

Count. Do you love my son?

Hel. Your pardon, noble mistress!

Count. Love you my son?

Hel. Do not you love him, madam?

Count. Go not about; my love hath in't a bond,
Whereof the world takes note: come, come, disclose
The state of your affection; for your passions
Have to the full impeach'd.

Hel. Then, I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,
That before you, and next unto high heaven,

I love your son :—
My friends were poor, but honest ; so's my love :
Be not offended ; for it hurts not him,
That he is loved of me : I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit ;
Nor would I have him, till I do deserve him ;
Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope ;
Yet, in this captious and intenible sieve,
I still pour in the waters of my love,
And lack not to lose still : thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love,
For loving where you do : but, if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,
Did ever, in so true a flame of liking,
Wish chastely, and love dearly, that your Dian
Was both herself and love ; O then, give pity
To her, whose state is such, that cannot choose
But lend and give, where she is sure to lose ;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,
But, riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies.

Count. Had you not lately an intent, speak truly,
To go to Paris ?

Hcl. Madam, I had.

Count. Wherefore ? tell true.

Hcl. I will tell truth ; by grace itself, I swear.
You know, my father left me some prescriptions
Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading,

And manifest experience, had collected
For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me
In heedfullest reservation to bestow them,
As notes, whose faculties inclusive were,
More than they were in note: amongst the rest,
There is a remedy, approv'd, set down,
To cure the desperate languishes, whereof
The king is render'd lost.

Count. This was your motive
For Paris, was it? speak.

Hel. My lord your son made me to think of this:
Else Paris, and the medicine, and the king,
Had, from the conversation of my thoughts,
Haply, been absent then.

Count. But think you, Helen,
If you should tender your supposed aid,
He would receive it? He and his physicians
Are of a mind; he, that they cannot help him,
They, that they cannot help: How shall they credit
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,
Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off
The danger to itself?

Hel. There's something hints,
More than my father's skill, which was the greatest
Of his profession, that his good receipt
Shall, for my legacy, be sanctified
By the luckiest stars in heaven: and, would your ho-
nour

But give me leave to try success, I'd venture
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure,
By such a day, and hour.

Count. Dost thou believe't?

Hel. Ay, madam, knowingly.

Count. Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave, and
love,

Means, and attendants, and my loving greetings
To those of mine in court; I'll stay at home,
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt:
Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Paris. A Room in the King's Palace.*

*Flourish. Enter King, with young Lords, taking leave
for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and
Attendants.*

King. Farewell, young lord, these warlike principles
Do not throw from you :—and you, my lord, fare-
well :—

Share the advice betwixt you ; if both gain all,
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received,
And is enough for both.

1 Lord. It is our hope, sir,
After well-enter'd soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.

King. No, no, it cannot be ; and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady,
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords ;
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen : let higher Italy
(Those 'bated, that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy,) see, that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it ; when
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,
That fame may cry you loud : I say, farewell.

2 Lord. Health, at your bidding, serve your majesty !

King. Those girls of Italy, take heed of them ;
They say, our French lack language to deny,
If they demand : beware of being captives,
Before you serve.

Both. Our hearts receive your warnings.

King. Farewell.—Come hither to me.

[*The King retires to a couch.*

1 Lord. O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind
us !

Par. 'Tis not his fault ; the spark—

2 Lord. O, 'tis brave wars !

Par. Most admirable : I have seen those wars.

Ber. I am commanded here, and kept a coil with—
Too young, and the next year, and 'tis too early.

Par. An thy mind stand to it, boy, steal away
bravely.

Ber. I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn,
But one to dance with ! By heaven, I'll steal away.

Lord. There's honour in the theft.

Par. Commit it, count.

2 Lord. I am your accessory ; and so farewell.

Ber. I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured
body.

1 Lord. Farewell, captain.

2 Lord. Sweet monsieur Parolles !

Par. Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin.
Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals :—
You shall find, in the regiment of the Spinii, one cap-
tain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here
on his sinister cheek ; it was this very sword entrench-

ed it: say to him, I live; and observe his reports for me.

2 Lord. We shall, noble captain.

Par. Mars dote on you for his novices! [Exit
Lords.] What will you do?

Ber. Stay; the king—— [Seeing him rise.

Par. Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have restrained yourself within the list of too cold an adieu: be more expressive to them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there, do muster true gait, eat, speak, and move under the influence of the most received star; and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed: after them, and take a more dilated farewell.

Ber. And I will do so.

Par. Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men. [Exit BERTRAM and PAROLLES.

Enter LAFEU.

Laf. Pardon, my lord, [Kneeling.] for me and for my tidings.

King. I'll fee thee to stand up.

Laf. Then here's a man Stands, that has brought his pardon. I would, you Had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy; and That, at my bidding, you could so stand up.

King. I would I had; so I had broke thy pate, And ask'd thee mercy for't.

Laf. Goodfaith, across: But, my good lord, 'tis thus; Will you be cur'd Of your infirmity?

King. No.

Laf. O, will you eat
No grapes, my royal fox? yes, but you will,
My noble grapes, an if my royal fox
Could reach them: I have seen a medicine,
That's able to breathe life into a stone;
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary,
With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch
Is powerful to araise king Pepin, nay,
To give great Charlemain a pen in his hand,
And write to her a love-line.

King. What her is this?

Laf. Why, doctor she: My lord, there's one arriv'd,
If you will see her,—now, by my faith and honour,
If seriously I may convey my thoughts
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke
With one, that, in her sex, her years, profession,
Wisdom, and constancy, hath amaz'd me more
Than I dare blame my weakness: Will you see her
(For that is her demand,) and know her business?
That done, laugh well at me.

King. Now, good Lafeu,
Bring in the admiration; that we with thee
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine,
By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

Laf. Nay, I'll fit you,
And not be all day neither. [Exit LAFEU.]

King. Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA.

Laf. Nay, come your ways.

King. This haste hath wings indeed.

Laf. Nay, come your ways;

This is his majesty, say your mind to him :
A traitor you do look like ; but such traitors
. His majesty seldom fears : I am Cressid's uncle,
That dare leave two together ; fare you well. [Exit.

King. Now, fair one, does your business follow us ?

Hel. Ay, my good lord. Gerard de Narbon was
My father ; in what he did profess, well found.

King. I knew him.

Hel. The rather will I spare my praises towards him ;
Knowing him, is enough. On his bed of death
Many receipts he gave me ; chiefly one,
Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,
And of his old experience the only darling,
He bad me store up, as a triple eye,
Safer than mine own two, more dear ; I have so :
And, hearing your high majesty is touch'd
With that malignant cause, wherein the honour
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,
I come to tender it, and my appliance,
With all bound humbleness.

King. We thank you, maiden ;
But may not be so credulous of cure,—
When our most learned doctors leave us ; and
The congregated college have concluded,
That labouring art can never ransome nature
From her inaidable estate,—I say we must not
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To émpiricks ; or to dissever so
Our great self and our credit, to esteem
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

Hel. My duty then shall pay me for my pains :

I will no more enforce mine office on you ;
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts
A modest one, to bear me back again.

King. I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful :
Thou thought'st to help me ; and such thanks I give,
As one near death to those that wish him live :
But, what at full I know, thou know'st no part ;
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

Hel. What I can do, can do no hurt to try,
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy :
He, that of greatest works is finisher,
Oft does them by the weakest minister :
So holy writ in babes bath judgment shown,
When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown

From simple sources ; and great seas have dried,
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
Where most it promises ; and oft it hits,
Where hope is coldest, and despair most sits.

King. I must not hear thee ; fare thee well, kind maid ;
Thy pains, not us'd, must by thyself be paid :
Proffers, not took, reap thanks for their reward.

Hel. Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd :
It is not so with him that all things knows,
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows :
But most it is presumption in us, when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent ;
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.
I am not an impostor, that proclaim

Myself against the level of mine aim ;
But know I think, and think I know most sure,
My art is not past power, nor you past cure.

King. Art thou so confident ? Within what space
Hop'st thou my cure ?

Hel. The greatest grace lending grace,
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring ;
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp ;
Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass ;
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,
Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

King. Upon thy certainty and confidence,
What dar'st thou venture ?

Hel. Tax of impudence,—
A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,—
Traduc'd by odious ballads ; my maiden's name
Sear'd otherwise ; no worse of worse extended,
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

King. Methinks, in thee some blessed spirit doth
speak ;
His powerful sound, within an organ weak :
And what impossibility would slay
In common sense, sense saves another way.
Thy life is dear ; for all, that life can rate
Worth name of life, in thee hath estimate ;
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, virtue, all
That happiness and prime can happy call :
Thou this to hazard, needs must intimate
Skill infinite, or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physick I will try ;
That ministers thine own death, if I die.

Hel. If I break time, or flinch in property
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die ;
And well deserv'd : Not helping, death's my fee ;
But, if I help, what do you promise me ?

King. Make thy demand.

Hel. But will you make it even ?

King. Ay, by my sceptre, and my hopes of heaven.

Hel. Then thou shalt give me, with thy kingly hand,
What husband in thy power I will command :
Exempted be from me the arrogance
To choose from forth the royal blood of France ;
My low and humble name to propagate
With any branch or image of thy state :
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

King. Here is my hand ; the premises observ'd,
Thy will by my performance shall be serv'd ;
So make the choice of thy own time ; for I,
Thy resolv'd patient, on thee still rely.
More should I question thee, and more I must ;
Though, more to know, could not be more to trust ;
From whence thou cam'st, how tended on,—But rest
Unquestion'd welcome, and undoubted blest.—
Give me some help here, ho !—If thou proceed
As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

[Flourish. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Rousillon. A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

Enter Countess and Clown.

Count. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

Clo. I will show myself highly fed, and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

Count. To the court! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

Clo. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he, that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and, indeed, such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court: but, for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

Count. Marry, that's a bountiful answer, that fits all questions.

Clo. It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks; the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn-buttock, or any buttock.

Count. Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

Clo. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffata punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's fore-finger, as a pancake for Shrove-tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean

to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth; nay, as the pudding to his skin.

Count. Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

Clo. From below your duke, to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

Count. It must be an answer of most monstrous size, that must fit all demands.

Clo. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to't: Ask me, if I am a courtier; it shall do you no harm to learn.

Count. To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

Clo. O lord, sir,—There's a simple putting off;—more, more, a hundred of them.

Count. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

Clo. O lord, sir,—Thick, thick, spare not me.

Count. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

Clo. O lord, sir,—Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

Count. You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

Clo. O lord, sir,—Spare not me.

Count. Do you cry, *O lord, sir*, at your whipping, and *spare not me*? Indeed, your *O lord, sir*, is very frequent to your whipping; you would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

Clo. I ne'er had worse luck in my life, in my—*O lord, sir*: I see, things may serve long, but not serve ever.

Count. I play the noble housewife with the time, to entertain it so merrily with a fool.

Clo. O lord, sir,—Why, there'st serves well again.

Count. An end, sir, to your business : Give Helen this, And urge her to a present answer back : Commend me to my kinsmen, and my son ; This is not much.

Clo. Not much commendation to them ?

Count. Not much employment for you : You understand me ?

Clo. Most fruitfully ; I am there before my legs.

Count. Haste you again. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.—*Paris. A Room in the King's Palace.*

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES.

Laf. They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar things, supernatural and causeless. Hence is it, that we make trifles of terrors; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

Par. Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder, that hath shot out in our latter times.

Ber. And so 'tis.

Laf. To be relinquished of the artists,—

Par. So I say ; both of Galen and Paracelsus.

Laf. Of all the learned and authentic fellows,—

Par. Right, so I say.

Laf. That gave him out incurable,—

Par. Why, there 'tis ; so say I too.

Laf. Not to be helped,—

Par. Right; as 'twere, a man assured of an—

Laf. Uncertain life, and sure death.

Par. Just, you say well; so would I have said.

Laf. I may truly say, it is a novelty to the world.

Par. It is, indeed: if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in,—What do you call there?—

Laf. A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

Par. That's it I would have said; the very same.

Laf. Why, your dolphin is not lustier; 'fore me I speak in respect—

Par. Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it; and he is of a most facinous spirit, that will not acknowledge it to be the—

Laf. Very hand of heaven.

Par. Ay, so I say.

Laf. In a most weak—

Par. And debile minister, great power, great transcendence; which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made, than alone the recovery of the king, as to be—

Laf. Generally thankful.

Enter King, HELEN A, and attendants.

Par. I would have said it; you say well: Here comes the king.

Laf. Lustick, as the Dutchman says: I'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head: Why, he's able to lead her a coranto.

Par. *Mort du Vinaigre!* Is not this Helen?

Laf. 'Fore God, I think so.

King. Go, call before me all the lords in court.—
[Exit an attendant.]

Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side;
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense
Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive
The confirmation of my promis'd gift,
Which but attends thy naming.

Enter several Lords.

Fair maid, send forth thine eye: this youthful parcel
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice
I have to use: thy frank election make;
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

Hel. To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress
Fall, when love please!—marry, to each, but one!

Laf. I'd give bay Curtal, and his furniture,
My mouth no more were broken than these boys,
And writ as little beard.

King. Peruse them well:
Not one of those, but had a noble father.

Hel. Gentlemen,
Heaven hath, through me, restor'd the king to health.

All. We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

Hel. I am a simple maid; and therein wealthiest,
That, I protest, I simply am a maid:—
Please it your majesty, I have done already:
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,
We blush, that thou should'st choose; but, be refus'd,
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever;
We'll ne'er come there again.

King. Make choice; and, see,

Who shuns thy love, shuns all his love in me.

Hel. Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly;
And to imperial Love, that god most high,
Do my sighs stream.—Sir, will you hear my suit?

1 Lord. And grant it.

Hel. Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

Laf. I had rather be in this choice, than throw ames-
ace for my life.

Hel. The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,
Before I speak, too threateningly replies:
Love make your fortunes twenty times above
Her, that so wishes, and her humble love!

2 Lord. No better, if you please.

Hel. My wish receive,
Which great love grant! and so I take my leave.

Laf. Do they all deny her? An they were sons of
mine, I'd have them whipped; or I would send them to
the Turk, to make eunuchs of.

Hel. Be not afraid [*To a lord.*] that I your hand
should take;
I'll never do you wrong for your own sake:
Blessing upon your vows! and in your bed
Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

Laf. These boys are boys of ice, they'll none have
her: sure, they are bastards to the English; the French
ne'er got them.

Hel. You are too young, too happy, and too good,
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

4 Lord. Fair one, I think not so.

Laf. There's one grape yet,—I am sure, thy father
drank wine.—But if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth
of fourteen; I have known thee already.

Hel. I dare not say, I take you : [To BERTRAM] but
I give
Me, and my service, ever whilst I live,
Into your guiding power.—This is the man.

King. Why then, young Bertram, take her, she's thy
wife.

Ber. My wife, my liege ? I shall beseech your high-
ness,
In such a business give me leave to use
The help of mine own eyes.

King. Know'st thou not, Bertram,
What she has done for me ?

Ber. Yes, my good lord ;
But never hope to know why I should marry her.

King. Thou know'st, she has rais'd me from my
sickly bed.

Ber. But follows it, my lord, to bring me down
Must answer for your raising ? I know her well ;
She had her breeding at my father's charge :
A poor physician's daughter my wife !—Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever !

King. 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty : If she be
All that is virtuous, (save what thou dislik'st,
A poor physician's daughter,) thou dislik'st
Of virtue for the name : but do not so ;
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed :
Where great additions swell, and virtue none,

It is a drop-sed honour: good alone
Is good, without a name; vileness is so:
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;
In these to nature she's immediate heir;
And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn,
Which challenges itself as honour's born,
And is not like the sire: Honours best thrive,
When rather from our acts we them derive
Than our fore-goers: the mere word's a slave,
Debauch'd on every tomb; on every grave,
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb,
Where dust, and damn'd oblivion, is the tomb
Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,
I can create the rest: virtue, and she,
Is her own dower: honour, and wealth, from me.

Ber. I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.

King. Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou should'st strive
to choose.

Hel. That you are well restor'd, my lord, I am glad;
Let the rest go.

King. My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,
I must produce my power: Here, take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love, and her desert; that canst not dream,
We, poizing us in her defective scale,
Shall weigh thee to the beam: that wilt not know
It is in us to plant thine honour, where
We please to have it grow: Check thy contempt:
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:

Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right,
Which both thy duty owes, and our power claims ;
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever,
Into the staggers, and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance ; both my revenge and hate,
Loosing upon thee in the name of justice,
Without all terms of pity : Speak ; thine answer.

Ber. Pardon, my gracious lord ; for I submit
My fancy to your eyes : When I consider,
What great creation, and what dole of honour,
Flies where you bid it, I find, that she, which late
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
The praised of the king ; who, so ennobled,
Is, as 'twere, born so.

King. Take her by the hand,
And tell her, she is thine : to whom I promise
A counterpoize ; if not to thy estate,
A balance more replete.

Ber. I take her hand.

King. Good fortune, and the favour of the king,
Smile upon this contract ; whose ceremony
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,
And be perform'd to-night : the solemn feast
Shall more attend upon the coming space,
Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her,
Thy love's to me religious ; else, does err.

[*Excunt King, BERTRAM, HELENA, Lords;*
and attendants.

Laf. Do you hear, monsieur ? a word with you.

Par. Your pleasure, sir ?

Laf. Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.

Par. Recantation?—My lord? my master?

Laf. Ay; Is it not a language, I speak?

Par. A most harsh one; and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master?

Laf. Are you companion to the count Rousillon?

Par. To any count; to all counts; to what is man.

Laf. To what is count's man; count's master is of another style.

Par. You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

Laf. I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age cannot bring thee.

Par. What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

Laf. I did think thee, for two ordinances, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass; yet the scarfs, and the bannerets, about thee, did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden. I have now found thee; when I lose thee again, I care not: yet art thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou art scarce worth.

Par. Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee,—

Laf. Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if—Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

Par. My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

Laf. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

Par. I have not, my lord, deserved it.

Laf. Yes, good faith, every dram of it; and I will not bate thee a scruple.

Par. Well, I shall be wiser.

Laf. E'en as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack o'the contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf, and beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge; that I may say, in the default, he is a man I know.

Par. My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

Laf. I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor doing eternal: for doing I am past; as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave. [Exit.

Par. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord!—Well, I must be patient; there is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a lord. I'll have no more pity of his age, than I would have of—I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU.

Laf. Sirrah, your lord and master's married, there's news for you; you have a new mistress.

Par. I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs: He is my good lord: whom I serve above, is my master.

Laf. Who, God?

Par. Ay, sir.

Laf. The devil it is, that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? dost make hose of thy sleeves? do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee: methinks, thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee. I think, thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.

Par. This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

Laf. Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller: you are more saucy with lords, and honourable personages, than the heraldry of your birth and virtue gives you commission. You are not worth another word, else I'd call yon knave. I leave you. [Exit.]

Enter BERTRAM.

Par. Good, very good; it is so then.—Good, very good; let it be concealed a while.

Ber. Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

Par. What is the matter, sweet heart?

Ber. Although before the solemn priest I have sworn, I will not bed her.

Par. What? what, sweet heart?

Ber. O my Parolles, they have married me:—I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

Par. France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits The tread of a man's foot: to the wars!

Ber. There's letters from my mother; what the import is,

I know not yet.

Par. Ay, that would be known: To the wars, my boy, to the wars!

He wears his honour in a box unseen,
That hugs his kicksy-wicksy here at home;
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed: To other regions!
France is a stable: we, that dwell in't, jades;
Therefore to the war!

Ber. It shall be so; I'll send her to my house,
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,
And wherefore I am fled; write to the king
That, which I durst not speak: His present gift
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,
Where noble fellows strike: War is no strife,
To the dark house, and the detested wife.

Par. Will this capricio hold in thee, art sure?

Ber. Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.
I'll send her straight away: To-morrow
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

Par. Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it.—
'Tis hard;
A young man, married, is a man that's marr'd:
Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go:
The king has done you wrong; but, hush! 'tis so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The same. Another Room in the same.*

Enter HELENA and Clown.

Hel. My mother greets me kindly : Is she well ?

Clo. She is not well ; but yet she has her health : she's very merry : but yet she is not well : but thanks be given, she's very well, and wants nothing i'the world ; but yet she is not well.

Hel. If she be very well, what does she ail, that she's not very well ?

Clo. Truly, she's very well, indeed, but for two things.

Hel. What two things ?

Clo. One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly ! the other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly !

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. Bless you, my fortunate lady !

Hel. I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.

Par. You had my prayers to lead them on ; and to keep them on, have them still.—O, my knave ! How does my old lady ?

Clo. So that you had her wrinkles, and I her money, I would she did as you say.

Par. Why, I say nothing.

Clo. Marry, you are the wiser man ; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing : To say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title ; which is within a very little of nothing.

Par. Away, thou'rt a knave.

Clo. You should have said, sir, before a knave thou art a knave; that is, before me thou art a knave: this had been truth, sir.

Par. Go to, thou art a witty fool, I have found thee.

Clo. Did you find me in yourself, sir? or were you taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure, and the increase of laughter.

Par. A good knave, i'faith, and well fed.—

Madam, my lord will go away to-night;
A very serious business calls on him.
The great prerogative and right of love,
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;
But puts it off by a compell'd restraint;
Whose want, and whose delay, is strewed with sweets,
Which they distil now in the curbed time,
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy,
And pleasure drown the brim.

Hel. What's his will else?

Par. That you will take your instant leave o'the king,
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthen'd with what apology you think
May make it probable need.

Hel. What more commands he?

Par. That, having this obtain'd, you presently
Attend his further pleasure.

Hel. In every thing I wait upon his will.

Par. I shall report it so.

Hel. I pray you.—Come, sirrah.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM.

Laf. But, I hope, your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

Ber. Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

Laf. You have it from his own deliverance.

Ber. And by other warranted testimony.

Laf. Then my dial goes not true; I took this lark for a bunting.

Ber. I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.

Laf. I have then sinned against his experience, and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes; I pray you, make us friends, I will pursue the amity.

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. These things shall be done, sir.

[To BERTRAM.]

Laf. Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

Par. Sir?

Laf. O, I know him well: Ay, sir; he, sir, is a good workman, a very good tailor.

Ber. Is she gone to the king?

[Aside to PAROLLES.]

Par. She is.

Ber. Will she away to-night?

Par. As you'll have her.

Ber. I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,

Given order for our horses ; and to-night,
When I should take possession of the bride,—
And, ere I do begin,—

Laf. A good traveller is something at the latter end
of a dinner ; but one that lies three-thirds, and uses a
known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should
be once heard, and thrice beaten.—God save you, cap-
tain.

Ber. Is there any unkindness between my lord and
you, monsieur ?

Par. I know not how I have deserved to run into
my lord's displeasure.

Laf. You have made shift to run into it, boots and
spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard ;
and out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer ques-
tion for your residence.

Ber. It may be, you have mistaken him, my lord.

Laf. And shall do so ever, though I took him at his
prayers. Fare you well, my lord ; and believe this of
me, There can be no kernel in this light nut ; the soul
of this man is his clothes : trust him not in matter of
heavy consequence ; I have kept of them tame, and
know their natures.—Farewell, monsieur : I have spo-
ken better of you, than you have or will deserve at my
hand ; but we must do good against evil. [Exit.]

Par. An idle lord, I swear.

Ber. I think so.

Par. Why, do you not know him ?

Par. Yes, I do know him well ; and common speech
Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA.

Hel. I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,
Spoke with the king, and have procur'd his leave
For present parting ; only, he desires
Some private speech with you.

Ber. I shall obey his will.
You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does
The ministration and required office
On my particular : prepar'd I was not
For such a business ; therefore am I found
So much unsettled : This drives me to entreat you,
That presently you take your way for home ;
And rather muse, than ask, why I entreat you :
For my respects are better than they seem ;
And my appointments have in them a need,
Greater than shows itself, at the first view,
To you, that know them not. This to my mother :

[Giving a letter.]
Twill be two days ere I shall see you ; so
I leave you to your wisdom.

Hel. Sir, I can nothing say,
But that I am your most obedient servant.

Ber. Come, come, no more of that.

Hel. And ever shall
With true observance seek to eke out that,
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd
To equal my great fortune.

Ber. Let that go :
My haste is very great : Farewell ; hie home.

Hel. Pray, sir, your pardon.

Ber. Well, what would you say?

Hel. I am not worthy of the wealth I owe;
Nor dare I say, 'tis mine; and yet it is;
But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal
What law does vouch mine own.

Ber. What would you have?

Hel. Something; and scarce so much:—nothing,
indeed.—

I would not tell you what I would: my lord—'faith,
yes;—
Strangers, and foes, do sunder, and not kiss.

Ber. I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

Hel. I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

Ber. Where are my other men, monsieur?—Farewell.
[Exit HELENA.

Go thou toward home; where I will never come,
Whilst I can shake my sword, or hear the drum:—
Away, and for our flight.

Par. Bravely, coragio!

[Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Florence. A Room in the Duke's Palace.*

Flourish. Enter the Duke of Florence, attended; two French Lords, and others.

Duke. So that, from point to point, now have you heard

The fundamental reasons of this war;
Whose great decision hath much blood let forth,
And more thirsts after.

1 Lord. Holy seems the quarrel
Upon your grace's part; black and fearful
On the opposer.

Duke. Therefore we marvel much, our cousin France
Would, in so just a business, shut his bosom
Against our borrowing prayers.

2 Lord. Good my lord,
The reasons of our state I cannot yield,
But like a common and an outward man,
That the great figure of a council frames
By self-unable motion: therefore dare not
Say what I think of it; since I have found
Myself in my uncertain grounds to fail
As often as I guess'd.

Duke. Be it his pleasure.

2 Lord. But I am sure, the younger of our nature,
That surfeit on their ease, will, day by day,
Come here for physick.

Duke. Welcome shall they be ;
And all the honours, that can fly from us,
Shall on them settle. You know your places well ;
When better fall, for your avails they fell :
To-morrow to the field. [Flourish. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Rousillon. A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

Enter Countess and Clown.

Count. It hath happened all as I would have had it, save, that he comes not along with her.

Clo. By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

Count. By what observance, I pray you ?

Clo. Why, he will look upon his boot, and sing ; mend the ruff, and sing ; ask questions, and sing ; pick his teeth, and sing : I know a man that had this trick of melancholy, sold a goodly manor for a song.

Count. Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come. [Opening a letter.]

Clo. I have no mind to Isbel, since I was at court ; our old ling and our Isbels o'the country are nothing like our old ling and our Isbels o'the court : the brains of my Cupid's knocked out ; and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

Count. What have we here ?

Clo. E'en that you have there. [Exit.]

Count. [Reads.] *I have sent you a daughter-in-law : she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her ; and sworn to make the not eter-*

nal. You shall hear, I am run away; know it, before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.

Your unfortunate son,

BERTRAM.

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,
To fly the favours of so good a king,
To pluck his indignation on thy head;
By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous
For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter Clown.

Clo. O madam, yonder is heavy news within, between two soldiers and my young lady.

Count. What is the matter?

Clo. Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

Count. Why should he be kill'd?

Clo. So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does: the danger is in standing to't; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they come, will tell you more: for my part, I only hear, your son was run away. [Exit Clown.

Enter HELENA and two Gentlemen.

1 Gen. Save you, good madam.

Hel. Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

2 Gen. Do not say so.

Count. Think upon patience.—'Pray you, gentlemen,—

I have felt so many quirks of joy, and grief,

That the first face of neither, on the start,
Can woman me unto't:—Where is my son, I pray you?

2 Gen. Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of Florence:

We met him thitherward; from thence we came,
And, after some despatch in hand at court,
Thither we bend again.

Hel. Look on his letter, madam; here's my passport.
[Reads.] *When thou canst get the ring upon my finger,*
which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten
of thy body, that I am father to, then call me hus-
band: but in such a then I write a never.

This is a dreadful sentence.

Count. Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

1 Gen. Ay, madam;

And, for the contents' sake, are sorry for our pains.

Count. I pr'ythee, lady, have a better cheer;
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,
Thou robb'st me of a moiety: He was my son;
But I do wash his name out of my blood,
And thou art all my child.—Towards Florence is he?

2 Gen. Ay, madam.

Count. And to be a-soldier?

2 Gen. Such is his noble purpose: and, believe't,
The duke will lay upon him all the honour,
That good convenience claims.

Count. Return you thither?

1 Gen. Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

Hel. [Reads.] *Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*

'Tis bitter.

Count. Find you that there?

Hel. Ay, madam.

1 Gen. 'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply,
which

His heart was not consenting to.

Count. Nothing in France, until he have no wife !
There's nothing here, that is too good for him,
But only she ; and she deserves a lord,
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon,
And call her hourly, mistress. Who was with him ?

1 Gen. A servant only, and a gentleman
Which I have some time known.

Count. Parolles, was't not ?

1 Gen. Ay, my good lady, he.

Count. A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.
My son corrupts a well derived nature
With his inducement.

1 Gen. Indeed, good lady,
The fellow has a deal of that, too much,
Which holds him much to have.

Count. You are welcome, gentlemen ;
I will entreat you, when you see my son,
To tell him, that his sword can never win
The honour that he loses : more I'll entreat you
Written to bear along.

2 Gen. We serve you, madam,
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

Count. Not so, but as we change our courtesies.
Will you draw near ?

[*Exeunt Countess and Gentlemen.*

Hel. Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.
Nothing in France, until he has no wife !
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France,

Then hast thou all again. Poor lord, is't I,
That chase thee from thy country, and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I,
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air,
That sings with piercing, do not touch my lord!
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the caitiff, that do hold him to it;
And, though I kill him not, I am the cause
His death was so effected: better 'twere,
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd
With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere
That all the miseries, which nature owes,
Were mine at once: No, come thou home, Rousillon,
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,
As oft it loses all; I will be gone:
My being here it is, that holds thee hence:
Shall I stay here to do't? no, no, although
The air of paradise did fan the house,
And angels offic'd all: I will be gone;
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,
To console thine ear. Come, night; end, day!
For, with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. [Exit.

SCENE III.—*Florence. Before the Duke's Palace.*

*Flourish. Enter the Duke of Florence, BERTRAM,
Lords, Officers, Soldiers, and others.*

Duke. The general of our horse thou art ; and we,
Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence
Upon thy promising fortune.

Ber. Sir, it is
A charge too heavy for my strength ; but yet
We'll strive to bear it, for your worthy sake,
To the extreme edge of hazard.

Duke. Then go thou forth ;
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,
As thy auspicious mistress !

Ber. This very day,
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file :
Make me but like my thoughts ; and I shall prove
A lover of thy drum, hater of love. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*Rouillon. A Room in the Countess's
Palace.*

Enter Countess and Steward.

Count. Alas ! and would you take the letter of her ?
Might you not know, she would do as she has done,
By sending me a letter ? Read it again.

Stew. I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone ;
Ambitious love hath so in me offended,

*That bare-foot plod I the cold ground upon,
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.
Write, write, that, from the bloody course of war,
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie ;
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I, from far,
His name with zealous fervour sanctify :
His taken labours bid him me forgive ;
I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,
Where death and danger dog the heels of worth :
He is too good and fair for death and me ;
Whom I myself embrace, to set him free.*

Count. Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words !—

Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much,
As letting her pass so ; had I spoke with her,
I could have well diverted her intents,
Which thus she hath prevented.

Stew. Pardon me, madam :
If I had given you this at over-night,
She might have been o'erta'en ; and yet she writes,
Pursuit would be in vain.

Count. What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband ? he cannot thrive,
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear,
And loves to grant, reprise him from the wrath
Of greatest justice.—*Write, write, Rinaldo,*
To this unworthy husband of his wife ;
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth,
That he does weigh too light : my greatest grief,
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.

Despatch the most convenient messenger :—
When, haply, he shall hear that she is gone,
He will return ; and hope I may, that she,
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,
Led hither by pure love : which of them both
Is dearest to me, I have no skill in sense
To make distinction :—Provide this messenger :—
My heart is heavy, and mine age is weak ;
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Without the Walls of Florence.*

A tucket afar off. Enter an old Widow of Florence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, MARIANA, and other Citizens.

Wid. Nay, come ; for if they do approach the city, we shall lose all the sight.

Dia. They say, the French count has done most honourable service.

Wid. It is reported that he has taken their greatest commander : and that with his own hand he slew the duke's brother. We have lost our labour ; they are gone a contrary way : hark ! you may know by their trumpets.

Mar. Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this French earl : the honour of a maid is her name ; and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

Wid. I have told my neighbour, how you have been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

Mar. I know that knave ; hang him ! one Parolles :

a filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl.—Beware of them, Diana; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under: many a maid hath been seduced by them; and the misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade succession, but they are limed with the twigs that threaten them. I hope, I need not to advise you further; but, I hope, your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known, but the modesty which is so lost.

Dia. You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELENA, in the dress of a Pilgrim.

Wid. I hope so.—Look, here comes a pilgrim: I know she will lie at my house: thither they send one another: I'll question her.—

God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?

Hel. To Saint Jaques le grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

Wid. At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

Hel. Is this the way?

Wid. Ay, marry, is it.—Hark you!

[*A march afar off.*

They come this way:—If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,
But till the troops come by,
I will conduct you where you shall be lodg'd;
The rather, for, I think, I know your hostess
As ample as myself.

Hel. Is it yourself?

Wid. If you shall please so, pilgrim.

Hel. I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

Wid. You came, I think, from France?

Hel. I did so.

Wid. Here you shall see a countryman of yours,
That has done worthy service.

Hel. His name, I pray you.

Dia. The count Rousillon; Know you such a one?

Hel. But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him:
His face I know not.

Dia. Whatsoe'er he is,
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,
As 'tis reported, for the king had married him
Against his liking: Think you it is so?

Hel. Ay, surely, mere the truth; I know his lady.

Dia. There is a gentleman, that serves the count,
Reports but coarsely of her.

Hel. What's his name?

Dia. Monsieur Parolles.

Hel. O, I believe with him,
In argument of praise, or to the worth
Of the great count himself, she is too mean
To have her name repeated; all her deserving
Is a reserved honesty, and that
I have not heard examin'd.

Dia. Alas, poor lady!
'Tis a hard bondage, to become the wife
Of a detesting lord.

Wid. A right good creature: wheresoe'er she is,
Her heart weighs sadly: this young maid might do her
A shrewd turn, if she pleas'd.

Hel. How do you mean?
May be, the amorous count solicits her
In the unlawful purpose.

Wid. He does, indeed;
And brokes with all that can in such a suit
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid:
But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard
In honestest defence.

Enter with drum and colours, a party of the Florentine army, BERTRAM, and PAROLLES.

Mar. The gods forbid else!

Wid. So, now they come:—

That is Antonio, the duke's eldest son;
That, Escalus.

Hel. Which is the Frenchman?

Dia. He;

That with the plume: 'tis a most gallant fellow;
I would, he lov'd his wife: if he were honest,
He were much goodlier:—Is't not a handsome gentleman?

Hel. I like him well.

Dia. 'Tis pity, he is not honest: Yond's that same knave,
That leads him to those places; were I his lady,
I'd poison that vile rascal.

Hel. Which is he?

Dia. That jack-an-apes with scarfs: Why is he melancholy?

Hel. Perchance he's hurt i'the battle.

Par. Lose our drum! well.

Mar. He's shrewdly vexed at something: Look, he has spied us.

Wid. Marry, hang you!

Mar. And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

[*Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Officers, and
Soldiers.*]

Wid. The troop is past: Come, pilgrim, I will bring
you

Where you shall host : of enjoin'd penitents
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,
Already at my house.

Hel. I humbly thank you ;
Please it this matron, and this gentle maid,
To eat with us to-night, the charge, and thanking,
Shall be for me ; and, to requite you further,
I will bestow some precepts on this virgin,
Worthy the note.

Both. We'll take your offer kindly. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*Camp before Florence.*

Enter BERTRAM, and the two French Lords.

1 Lord. Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him
have his way.

2 Lord. If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold
me no more in your respect.

1 Lord. On my life, my lord, a bubble.

Ber. Do you think, I am so far deceived in him ?

1 Lord. Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct
knowledge, without any malice, but to speak of him
as my kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite
and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner
of no one good quality worthy your lordship's enter-
tainment.

2 Lord. It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath not, he might, at some great and trusty business, in a main danger, fail you.

Ber. I would, I knew in what particular action to try him.

2 Lord. None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

1 Lord. I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprize him; such I will have, whom, I am sure, he knows not from the enemy: we will bind and hoodwink him so, that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries, when we bring him to our tents: Be but your lordship present at his examination; if he do not, for the promise of his life, and in the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you, and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgment in anything.

2 Lord. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum; he says, he has a stratagem for't: when your lordship sees the bottom of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

Enter PAROLLES.

1 Lord. O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the humour of his design; let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

Ber. How now, monsieur? this drum sticks sorely in your disposition?

2 Lord. A pox on't, let it go; 'tis but a drum.

Par. But a drum! Is't but a drum? A drum so lost!—There was an excellent command! to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers.

2 Lord. That was not to be blamed in the command of the service; it was a disaster of war that Cæsar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

Ber. Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success: some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered.

Par. It might have been recovered.

Ber. It might, but it is not now.

Par. It is to be recovered: but that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or *hic jacet*.

Ber. Why, if you have a stomach to't, monsieur, if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprize, and go on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit: if you speed well in it, the duke shall both speak of it, and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

Par. By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

Ber. But you must not now slumber in it.

Par. I'll about it this evening: and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my cer-

tainty, put myself into my mortal preparation, and, by midnight, look to hear further from me.

Ber. May I be bold to acquaint his grace, you are gone about it?

Par. I know not what the success will be, my lord; but the attempt I vow.

Ber. I know, thou art valiant; and, to the possibility of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

Par. I love not many words. [Exit.]

1 *Lord.* No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord? that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do, and dares better be damned than to do't.

2 *Lord.* You do not know him, my lord, as we do: certain it is, that he will steal himself into a man's favour, and, for a week, escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

Ber. Why, do you think, he will make no deed at all of this, that so seriously he does address himself unto?

1 *Lord.* None in the world; but return with an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable lies: but we have almost embossed him, you shall see his fall to-night; for, indeed, he is not for your lordship's respect.

2 *Lord.* We'll make you some sport with the fox, ere we first case him. He was smocked by the old lord Lafew: when his disguise and he is parted, tell me

what a sprat you shall find him ; which you shall see
this very night.

1 *Lord.* I must go look my twigs ; he shall be caught.

Ber. Your brother, he shall go along with me.

1 *Lord.* As't please your lordship : I'll leave you.

[*Exit.*

Ber. Now will I lead you to the house, and show
you

The lass I spoke of.

2 *Lord.* But, you say, she's honest.

Ber. That's all the fault : I spoke with her but once,
And found her wondrous cold ; but I sent to her,
By this same coxcomb that we have i'the wind,
Tokens and letters which she did re-send ;
And this is all I have done : She's a fair creature ;
Will you go see her ?

2 *Lord.* With all my heart, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*Florence. A Room in the Widow's House.*

Enter HELENA and Widow.

Hel. If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further,
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

Wid. Though my estate be fallen, I was well born,
Nothing acquainted with these businesses ;
And would not put my reputation now
In any staining act.

Hel. Nor would I wish you.
First, give me trust, the count he is my husband ;

And, what to your sworn counsel I have spoken,
Is so, from word to word; and then you cannot,
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,
Err in bestowing it.

Wid. I should believe you;
For you have show'd me that, which well approves
You are great in fortune.

Hcl. Take this purse of gold,
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,
Which I will over-pay, and pay again,
When I have found it. The count he wooes your
daughter,

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,
Resolves to carry her; let her, in fine, consent,
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it,
Now his important blood will nought deny,
That she'll demand: A ring the county wears,
That downward hath succeeded in his house,
From son to son, some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it: this ring he holds
In most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,
To buy his will it would not seem too dear,
Howe'er repented after.

Wid. Now I see
The bottom of your purpose.

Hcl. You see it lawful then: It is no more,
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,
Herself most chastely absent: after this,
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns
To what is past already.

Wid. I have yielded:
Instruct my daughter how she shall perséver,
That time and place, with this deceit so lawful,
May prove coherent. Every night he comes
With musicks of all sorts, and songs compos'd
To her unworthiness: It nothing steads us,
To chide him from our eaves; for he persists,
As if his life lay on't.

Hel. Why then, to-night
Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed,
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
And lawful meaning in a lawful act;
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact:
But let's about it.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Without the Florentine Camp.*

Enter first Lord, with five or six soldiers in ambush.

1 *Lord.* He can come no other way but by this hedge' corner : When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will; though you understand it not yourselves, no matter: for we must not seem to understand him ; unless some one among us, whom we must produce for an interpreter.

1 *Sold.* Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

1 *Lord.* Art not acquainted with him ? knows he not thy voice ?

1 *Sold.* No, sir, I warrant you.

1 *Lord.* But what linsy-woolsy hast thou to speak to us again ?

1 *Sold.* Even such as you speak to me.

1 *Lord.* He must think us some band of strangers i'the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages ; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another ; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose; chough's language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politick. But couch, ho ! here he comes ; to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES.

Par. Ten o'clock : within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: They begin to smoke me ; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find, my tongue is too fool-hardy ; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

1 *Lord.* This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of. [Aside.]

Par. What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum ; being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose ? I must give myself some hurts, and say, I got them in exploit: Yet slight ones will not carry it : They will say, Came you off with so little ? and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore ? what's the instance ? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth, and buy another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

1 *Lord.* Is it possible, he should know what he is, and be that he is ? [Aside.]

Par. I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn ; or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

1 *Lord.* We cannot afford you so. [Aside.]

Par. Or the baring of my beard ; and to say, it was in stratagem.

1 *Lord.* 'Twould not do. [Aside.]

Par. Or to drown my clothes, and say, I was stripped.

1 Lord. Hardly serve. [Aside.]

Par. Though I swore I leaped from the window of
the citadel——

1 Lord. How deep? [Aside.]

Par. Thirty fathom.

1 Lord. Three great oaths would scarce make that be
believed. [Aside.]

Par. I would, I had any drum of the enemy's; I
would swear, I had recovered it.

1 Lord. You shall hear one anon. [Aside.]

Par. A drum now of the enemy's!

[Alarum within.]

1 Lord. *Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.*

All. *Cargo, cargo, villienda, par corbo, cargo.*

Par. O! ransome, ransome:—Do not hide mine
eyes. [They seize him and blindfold him.]

1 Sold. *Boskos thromuldo boskos.*

Par. I know you are the Muskos' regiment.
And I shall lose my life for want of language:
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,
Italian, or French, let him speak to me,
I will discover that, which shall undo
The Florentine.

1 Sold. *Boskos vanoudo:*——

I understand thee, and can speak thy tongue:——

Kerelybonto:——Sir,

Betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards
Are at thy bosom.

Par. Oh!

1 Sold. O, pray, pray, pray.——

Manka revania dulche.

1 Lord. *Oscorbi dulchos volivorca.*

1 Sold. The general is content to spare thee yet;
And, hood-wink'd as thou art, will lead thee on
To gather from thee: haply, thou may'st inform
Something to save thy life.

Par. O, let me live,
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,
Their force, their purposes: nay, I'll speak that,
Which you will wonder at.

1 Sold. But wilt thou faithfully?

Par. If I do not, damn me.

1 Sold. *Acordo linta.*—
Come on, thou art granted space.

[*Exit, with PAROLLES guarded.*

1 Lord. Go, tell the count Rousillon, and my brother,
We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him
muffled,
Till we do hear from them.

2 Sold. Captain, I will.
1 Lord. He will betray us all unto ourselves;—
Inform 'em that.

2 Sold. So I will, sir.
1 Lord. Till then, I'll keep him dark, and safely
lock'd.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Widow's House.*

Enter BERTRAM and DIANA.

Ber. They told me, that your name was Fontibell.

Dia. No, my good lord, Diana.

Ber. Titled goddess;

And worth it, with addition ! But, fair soul,
In your fine frame hath love no quality ?
If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,
You are no maiden, but a monument :
When you are dead, you should be such a one
As you are now, for you are cold and stern ;
And now you should be as your mother was,
When your sweet self was got.

Dia. She then was honest.

Ber. So should you be.

Dia. No :

My mother did but duty ; such, my lord,
As you owe to your wife.

Ber. No more of that !
I pr'ythee, do not strive against my vows :
I was compell'd to her ; but I love thee
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever
Do thee all rights of service.

Dia. Ay, so you serve us,
Till we serve you : but when you have our roses,
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,
And mock us with our bareness.

Ber. How have I sworn ?

Dia. 'Tis not the many oaths, that make the truth ;
But the plain single vow, that is vow'd true.
What is not holy, that we swear not by,
But take the Highest to witness : Then, pray you, tell
me,

If I should swear by Jove's great attributes,
I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths,
When I did love you ill ? this has no holding,
To swear by him, whom I protest to love,

That I will work against him : Therefore, your oaths
Are words, and poor conditions ; but unseal'd ;
At least, in my opinion.

Ber. Change it, change it ;
Be not so holy cruel : love is holy ;
And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts,
That you do charge men with : Stand no more off,
But give thyself unto my sick desires,
Who then recover : say, thou art mine, and ever
My love, as it begins, shall so perséver.

Dia. I see, that men make hopes, in such affairs,
That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

Ber. I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power
To give it from me.

Dia. Will you not, my lord ?

Ber. It is an honour 'longing to our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors ;
Which were the greatest obloquy i'the world
In me to lose.

Dia. Mine honour's such a ring :
My chastity's the jewel of our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors ;
Which were the greatest obloquy i'the world
In me to lose : Thus your own proper wisdom
Brings in the champion honour on my part,
Against your vain assault.

Ber. Here, take my ring :
My house, mine honour, yea, my life be thine,
And I'll be bid by thee.

Dia. When midnight comes, knock at my chamber
window ;
I'll order take, my mother shall not hear.

Now will I charge you in the band of truth,
When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me :
My reasons are most strong ; and you shall know them,
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd :
And, on your finger, in the night, I'll put
Another ring ; that, what in time proceeds,
May token to the future our past deeds.
Adieu, till then ; then, fail not : You have won
A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

Ber. A heaven on earth I have won, by wooing thee.

[*Exit.*]

Dia. For which live long to thank both heaven and
me !

You may so in the end.—
My mother told me just how he would woo,
As if she sat in his heart ; she says, all men
Have the like oaths : he had sworn to marry me,
When his wife's dead ; therefore I'll lie with him,
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,
Marry that will, I'll live and die a maid :
Only, in this disguise, I think't no sin
To cozen him, that would unjustly win. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—*The Florentine Camp.*

Enter the two French Lords, and two or three Soldiers.

1 *Lord.* You have not given him his mother's letter ?
2 *Lord.* I have delivered it an hour since : there is
something in't that stings his nature ; for, on the reading
it, he changed almost into another man.

1 *Lord.* He has much worthy blame laid upon him, for shaking off so good a wife, and so sweet a lady.

2 *Lord.* Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the king, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you.

1 *Lord.* When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

2 *Lord.* He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour: he hath given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

1 *Lord.* Now, God delay our rebellion; as we are ourselves, what things are we!

2 *Lord.* Merely our own traitors. And as, in the common course of all treasons, we still see them reveal themselves, till they attain to their abhorred ends; so he, that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.

1 *Lord.* Is it not meant damnable in us, to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents? We shall not then have his company to-night?

2 *Lord.* Not till after midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

1 *Lord.* That approaches apace: I would gladly have him see his company anatomized: that he might take a measure of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.

2 *Lord.* We will not meddle with him till he come; for his presence must be the whip of the other.

1 *Lord.* In the mean time, what hear you of these wars?

2 *Lord.* I hear, there is an overture of peace.

1 *Lord.* Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

2 *Lord.* What will count Rousillon do then? will he travel higher, or return again into France?

1 *Lord.* I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his council.

2 *Lord.* Let it be forbid, sir! so should I be a great deal of his act.

1 *Lord.* Sir, his wife, some two months since, fled from his house; her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le grand: which holy undertaking, with most austere sanctimony, she accomplished: and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.

2 *Lord.* How is this justified?

1 *Lord.* The stronger part of it by her own letters; which makes her story true, even to the point of her death: her death itself, which could not be her office to say, is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place.

2 *Lord.* Hath the count all this intelligence?

1 *Lord.* Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, to the full arming of the verity.

2 *Lord.* I am heartily sorry, that he'll be glad of this.

1 *Lord.* How mightily, sometimes, we make us comforts of our losses!

2 *Lord.* And how mightily, some other times, we drown our gain in tears! The great dignity, that his

valour hath here acquired for him, shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.

1 *Lord.* The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherish'd by our virtues.—

Enter a Servant.

How now? where's your master?

Serv. He met the duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave; his lordship will next morning for France. The duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the king.

2 *Lord.* They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can command.

Enter BERTRAM.

1 *Lord.* They cannot be too sweet for the king's tartness. Here's his lordship now. How now, my lord, is't not after midnight?

Ber. I have to-night despatched sixteen businesses, a month's length a-piece, by an abstract of success: I have conge'd with the duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourned for her; writ to my lady mother, I am returning; entertained my convoy; and, between these main parcels of despatch, effected many nicer needs; the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

2 *Lord.* If the business be of any difficulty, and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

Ber. I mean, the business is not ended, as fearing to

hear of it hereafter: But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier?—Come, bring forth this counterfeit module; he has deceived me, like a double-meaning prophesier.

2 Lord. Bring him forth: [*Exeunt soldiers.*] he has sat in the stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

Ber. No matter; his heels have deserved it, in usurping his spurs so long. How does he carry himself?

1 Lord. I have told your lordship already; the stocks carry him. But, to answer you as you would be understood; he weeps, like a wench that had shed her milk: he hath confessed himself to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his remembrance, to this very instant disaster of his setting i'the stocks: And what think you he hath confessed?

Ber. Nothing of me, has he?

2 Lord. His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his face: if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must have the patience to hear it.

Re-enter Soldiers, with PAROLLES.

Ber. A plague upon him! muffled! he can say nothing of me; hush! hush!

1 Lord. Hoodman comes!—*Porto tartarossa.*

1 Sold. He calls for the tortures; What will you say without 'em?

Par. I will confess what I know without constraint; if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

1 Sold. *Bosko chimurcho.*

2 Lord. *Boblibindo chicurmurco.*

1 Sold. You are a merciful general:—Our general bids you answer to what I shall ask you out of a note.

Par. And truly, as I hope to live.

1 Sold. *First demand of him how many horse the duke is strong.* What say you to that?

Par. Five or six thousand; but very weak and un-serviceable: the troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live.

1 Sold. Shall I set down your answer so?

Par. Do; I'll take the sacrament on't, how and which way you will.

Ber. All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

1 Lord. You are deceived, my lord; this is monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist, (that was his own phrase,) that had the whole theorick of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger.

2 Lord. I will never trust a man again, for keeping his sword clean; nor believe he can have every thing in him, by wearing his apparel neatly.

1 Sold. Well, that's set down.

Par. Five or six thousand horse, I said,—I will say true,—or thereabouts, set down,—for I'll speak truth.

1 Lord. He's very near the truth in this.

Ber. But I con him no thanks for't, in the nature he delivers it.

Par. Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

1 Sold. Well, that's set down.

Par. I humbly thank you, sir: a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvellous poor.

1 Sold. *Demand of him, of what strength they are a-foot.* What say you to that?

Par. By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio a hundred

and fifty, Sebastian so many, Corambus so many, Jaques so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each: mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each: so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of which dare not shake the snow from off their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.

Ber. What shall be done to him?

1 Lord. Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my conditions, and what credit I have with the duke.

1 Sold. Well, that's set down. *You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Dumain be i'the camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the duke, what his valour, honesty, and expertness in wars; or whether he thinks, it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt.* What say you to this? what do you know of it?

Par. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the interrogatories: Demand them singly.

1 Sold. Do you know this captain Dumain?

Par. I know him: he was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the sheriff's fool with child; a dumb innocent, that could not say him, nay. [DUMAIN lifts up his hand in anger.

Ber. Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know, his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

1 Sold. Well, is this captain in the duke of Florence's camp?

Par. Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy.

1 *Lord.* Nay, look not so upon me; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

1 *Sold.* What is his reputation with the duke?

Par. The duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine; and writ to me this other day, to turn him out o'the band: I think, I have his letter in my pocket.

1 *Sold.* Marry, we'll search.

Par. In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there, or it is upon a file, with the duke's other letters, in my tent.

1 *Sold.* Here 'tis; here's a paper; Shall I read it to you?

Par. I do not know, if it be it, or no.

Ber. Our interpreter does it well.

1 *Lord.* Excellently.

1 *Sold.* Dian, *The count's a fool, and full of gold,*—

Par. That is not the duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurement of one count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but, for all that, very ruttish: I pray you, sir, put it up again.

1 *Sold.* Nay, I'll read it first, by your favour.

Par. My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid: for I knew the young count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy; who is a whale to virginity, and devours up all the fry it finds.

Ber. Damnable, both sides rogue!

1 *Sold.* *When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it;*

After he scores, he never pays the score:

Half won, is match well made; match, and well make it;

He ne'er pays after debts, take it before;

*And say, a soldier, Dian, told thee this,
Men are to merr with, boys are not to kiss :
For count of this, the count's a fool, I know it,
Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.*

Thine, as he vow'd to thee in thine ear,

PAROLLES.

Ber. He shall be whipp'd through the army, with this rhyme in his forehead.

2 Lord. This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist, and the armipotent soldier.

Ber. I could endure any thing before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me.

1 Sold. I perceive, sir, by the general's looks, we shall be fain to hang you.

Par. My life, sir, in any case: not that I am afraid to die; but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature: let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i'the stocks, or any where, so I may live.

1 Sold. We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely; therefore, once more to this captain Dumain: You have answered to his reputation with the duke, and to his valour: What is his honesty?

Par. He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister; for rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus. He professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking them, he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool: drunkenness is his best virtue; for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bed-clothes about him; but they know his conditions, and lay him

in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty : he has every thing that an honest man should not have ; what an honest man should have, he has nothing.

1 *Lord.* I begin to love him for this.

Ber. For this description of thine honesty ? A pox upon him for me, he is more and more a cat.

1 *Sold.* What say you to his expertness in war ?

Par. Faith, sir, he has led the drum before the English tragedians,—to belie him, I will not,—and more of his soldiership I know not ; except, in that country, he had the honour to be the officer at a place there call'd Mile-end, to instruct for the doubling of files : I would do the man what honour I can, but of this I am not certain.

1 *Lord.* He hath out-villained villainy so far, that the rarity redeems him.

Ber. A pox on him ! he's a cat still.

1 *Sold.* His qualities being at this poor price, I need not ask you, if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

Par. Sir, for a *quart d'ecu* he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it ; and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

1 *Sold.* What's his brother, the other captain Du-main ?

2 *Lord.* Why does he ask him of me ?

1 *Sold.* What's he ?

Par. E'en a crow of the same nest ; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He excels his brother for a coward, yet his

brother is reputed one of the best that is : In a retreat he out-runs any lackey ; marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

1 *Sold.* If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray the Florentine ?

Par. Ay, and the captain of his horse, count Rou-sillon.

1 *Sold.* I'll whisper with the general, and know his pleasure.

Par. I'll no more drumming ; a plague of all drums ! Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the count, have I run into this danger : Yet, who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken ? [Aside.]

1 *Sold.* There is no remedy, sir, but you must die : the general says, you, that have so traitorously discovered the secrets of your army, and made such pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use ; therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

Par. O lord, sir ; let me live, or let me see my death !

1 *Sold.* That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [Unmuffling him.]

So, look about you ; Know you any here ?

Ber. Good morrow, noble captain.

2 *Lord.* God bless you, captain Parolles.

1 *Lord.* God save you, noble captain.

2 *Lord.* Captain, what greeting will you to my lord Lafeu ? I am for France.

1 *Lord.* Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the count Rou-

sillon? an I were not a very coward, I'd compel it of you; but fare you well.

[*Exit BERTRAM, Lords, &c.*]

1 *Sold.* You are undone, captain: all but your scarf, that has a knot on't yet.

Par. Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

1 *Sold.* If you could find out a country where but women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fare you well, sir; I am for France too; we shall speak of you there.

[*Exit.*]

Par. Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great,
Twould burst at this: Captain I'll be no more;
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
As captain shall: simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it will come to pass,
That every braggart shall be found an ass.
Rust, sword! cool, blushes! and, Parolles, live }
Safest in shame! being fool'd, by foolery thrive! }
There's place, and means, for every man alive.
I'll after them.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*Florence. A Room in the Widow's house.*

Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA.

Hel. That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd
you,
One of the greatest in the Christian world
Shall be my surety; 'fore whose throne, 'tis needful,
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel:

Time was, I did him a desired office,
Dear almost as his life; which gratitude
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,
And answer, thanks: I duly am inform'd,
His grace is at Marseilles; to which place
We have convenient convoy. You must know,
I am supposed dead: the army breaking,
My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding,
And by the leave of my good lord the king,
We'll be, before our welcome.

Wid. Gentle madam,
You never had a servant, to whose trust
Your business was more welcome.

Hel. Nor you, mistress,
Ever a friend, whose thoughts more truly labour
To recompense your love; doubt not, but heaven
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,
As it hath fated her to be my motive
And helper to a husband. But O strange men!
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,
When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts
Defiles the pitchy night! so lust doth play
With what it loaths, for that which is away:
But more of this hereafter:—You, Diana,
Under my poor instructious yet must suffer
Something in my behalf.

Dia. Let death and honesty
Go with your impositions, I am yours
Upon your will to suffer.

Hel. Yet, I pray you,—
But with the word, the time will bring on summer,
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,

And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;
Our waggon is prepar'd, and time revives us:
All's well that ends well: still the fine's the crown;
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. [Exit].

SCENE V.—*Rousillon. A room in the Countess's palace.*

Enter Countess, LAFEU, and Clown.

Laf. No, no, no, your son was misled with a snipt-taffata fellow there; whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughty youth of a nation in his colour: your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour; and your son here at home, more advanced by the king, than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

Count. I would, I had not known him! it was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman, that ever nature had praise for creating: if she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love.

Laf. 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady: we may pick a thousand salads, ere we light on such another herb.

Clo. Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the salad, or, rather the herb of grace.

Laf. They are not salad-herbs, you knave, they are nose-herbs.

Clo. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass.

Laf. Whether dost thou profess thyself; a knave, or a fool?

Clo. A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

Laf. Your distinction?

Clo. I would cozen the man of his wife, and do his service.

Laf. So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

Clo. And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

Laf. I will subscribe for thee; thou art both knave and fool.

Clo. At your service.

Laf. No, no, no.

Clo. Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.

Laf. Who's that? a Frenchman?

Clo. Faith, sir, he has an English name; but his phisnomy is more hotter in France, than there.

Laf. What prince is that?

Clo. The black prince, sir; *alias*, the prince of darkness; *alias*, the devil.

Laf. Hold thee, there's my purse: I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of; serve him still.

Clo. I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire; and the master, I speak of, ever keeps a good fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world, let his nobility remain in his court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter: some, that humble themselves, may; but the many will be too chill and tender; and they'll be for the flowery way, that leads to the broad gate, and the great fire.

Laf. Go thy ways, I begin to be a-weary of thee; and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways; let my horses be well looked to, without any tricks.

Clo. If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades tricks; which are their own right by the law of nature. [Exit.

Laf. A shrewd knave, and an unhappy.

Count. So he is. My lord, that's gone, made himself much sport out of him: by his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness; and, indeed, he has no pace, but runs where he will.

Laf. I like him well; 'tis not amiss: and I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death, and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the king, my master, to speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, first did propose; his highness hath promised me to do it: and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it?

Count. With very much content, my lord, and I wish it happily effected.

Laf. His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he numbered thirty; he will be here to-morrow, or I am deceived by him, that in such intelligence hath seldom failed.

Count. It rejoices me, that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here to-night:

I shall beseech your lordship, to remain with me till they meet together.

Laf. Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted.

Count. You need but plead your honourable privilege.

Laf. Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but, I thank my God, it holds yet.

Re-enter Clown.

Clo. O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face: whether there be a scar under it, or no, the velvet knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet: his left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

Laf. A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good library of honour; so, belike, is that.

Clo. But it is your carbonadoed face.

Laf. Let us go see your son, I pray you; I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

Clo. 'Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats, and most courteous feathers, which bow the head, and nod at every man. [Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Marseilles. A Street.*

Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA, with two Attendants.

Hel. But this exceeding posting, day and night,
Must wear your spirits low: we cannot help it;
But, since you have made the days and nights as one,
To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,
Be bold, you do so grow in my requital,
As nothing can unroot you. In happy time;—

Enter a gentle Astringer.

This man may help me to his majesty's ear,
If he would spend his power.—God save you, sir.

Gent. And you.

Hel. Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

Gent. I have been sometimes there.

Hel. I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen
From the report, that goes upon your goodness;
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to
The use of your own virtues, for the which
I shall continue thankful.

Gent. What's your will?

Hel. That it will please you
To give this poor petition to the king;

And aid me with that store of power you have,
To come into his presence.

Gent. The king's not here.

Hel. Not here, sir?

Gent. Not, indeed:

He hence remov'd last night, and with more haste
Than is his use.

Wid. Lord, how we lose our pains!

Hel. *All's well that ends well*, yet;
Though time seem so adverſe, and means unfit.—

I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

Gent. Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;
Whither I am going.

Hel. I do beseech you, sir,
Since you are like to see the king before me,
Commend the paper to his gracious hand;
Which, I presume, shall render you no blame,
But rather make you thank your pains for it:
I will come after you, with what good speed
Our means will make us means.

Gent. This I'll do for you.

Hel. And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,
Whate'er falls more.—We must to horse again;
Go, go, provide. [Exit].

SCENE II.—*Rousillon. The inner court of the Countess's palace.*

Enter Clown and PAROLLES.

Par. Good monsieur Lavatch, give my lord Lafet
this letter: I have cre now, sir, been better known to

you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in fortune's moat, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

Clo. Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell so strong as thou speakest of: I will henceforth eat no fish of fortune's buttering. Pr'ythee, allow the wind.

Par. Nay, you need not stop your nose, sir; I speake but by a metaphor.

Clo. Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink; I will stop my nose; or against any man's metaphor. Pr'ythee, get thee further.

Par. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

Clo. Foh, pr'ythee, stand away: A paper from fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU.

Here is a pur of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's cat, (but not a musk-cat,) that has fallen into the unclean fish-pond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal: Pray you, sir, use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my smiles of comfort, and leave him to your lordship. [*Exit Clown.*]

Par. My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched.

Laf. And what would you have me to do? 'tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady, and would not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a *quart decu* for

you: Let the justices make you and fortune friends; I am for other business.

Par. I beseech your honour, to hear me one single word.

Laf. You beg a single penny more: come, you shall ha't; save your word.

Par. My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

Laf. You beg more than one word then.—Cox' my passion! give me your hand:—How does your drum?

Par. O my good lord, you were the first that found me.

Laf. Was I, in sooth? and I was the first that lost thee.

Par. It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.

Laf. Out upon thee, knave! dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil? one brings thee in grace, and the other brings thee out. [Trumpets sound.] The king's coming, I know by his trumpets.—Sirrah, inquire further after me; I had talk of you last night; though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat; go to, follow.

Par. I praise God for you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The same. A Room in the Countess's Palace.*

Flourish. Enter King, Countess, LAFEU, Lords, Gentlemen, Guards, &c.

King. We have lost a jewel of her; and our esteem Was made much poorer by it: but your son,

As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know
Her estimation home.

Count. 'Tis past, my liege:
And I beseech your majesty to make it
Natural rebellion, done i'the blaze of youth;
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbears it, and burns on.

King. My honour'd lady,
I have forgiven and forgotten all;
Though my revenges were high bent upon him,
And watch'd the time to shoot.

Laf. This I must say,—
But first I beg my pardon,—The young lord
Did to his majesty, his mother, and his lady,
Offence of mighty note; but to himself
The greatest wrong of all: he lost a wife,
Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes; whose words all ears took captive;
Whose dear perfection, hearts that scorn'd to serve,
Humbly call'd mistress.

King. Praising what is lost,
Makes the remembrance dear.—Well, call him hi-
ther;—
We are reconcil'd, and the first view shall kill
All repetition:—Let him not ask our pardon;
The nature of his great offence is dead,
And deeper than oblivion do we bury
The incensing relicks of it: let him approach,
A stranger, no offender; and inform him,
So 'tis our will he should.

Gent. I shall, my liege.

'Exit Gentleman.

King. What says he to your daughter? have you spoke?

Laf. All that he is hath reference to your highness.

King. Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me,

That set him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM.

Laf. He looks well on't.

King. I am not a day of season,
For thou mayst see a sun-shine and a hail
In me at once: But to the brightest beams
Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth,
The time is fair again.

Ber. My high-repent'd blames,
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

King. All is whole;
Not one word more of the consumed time.
Let's take the instant by the forward top;
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of time
Steals, ere we can effect them: You remember
The daughter of this lord?

Ber. Admiringly, my liege: at first
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue:
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful pérsppective did lend me,
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stol'n;
Extended or contracted all proportions,
To a most hideous object: Thence it came,

That she, whom all men prais'd, and whom myself,
Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye
The dust that did offend it.

King. Well excus'd :
That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away
From the great compt : But love, that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying, That's good that's gone : our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them, until we know their grave :
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust :
Our own love waking cries to see what's done,
While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin :
The main consents are had ; and here we'll stay
To see our widower's second marriage-day.

Count. Which better than the first, O dear heaven,
 bless !

Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cease !

Laf. Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested, give a favour from you,
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come.—By my old beard,
And every hair that's on't, Helen, that's dead,
Was a sweet creature ; such a ring as this,
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,
I saw upon her finger.

Ber. Her's it was not.

King. Now, pray you, let me see it ; for mine eye,

While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.—
This ring was mine; and, when I gave it Helen,
I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood
Necessitated to help, that by this token
I would relieve her: Had you that craft, to reave her
Of what should stead her most?

Ber. My gracious sovereign,
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,
The ring was never her's.

Count. Son, on my life,
I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it
At her life's rate.

Laf. I am sure, I saw her wear it.

Ber. You are deceiv'd, my lord, she never saw it:
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name
Of her that threw it: noble she was, and thought
I stood engag'd: but when I had subscrib'd
To mine own fortune, and inform'd her fully,
I could not answer in that course of honour
As she had made the overture, she ceas'd,
In heavy satisfaction, and would never
Receive the ring again.

King. Plutus himself,
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,
Hath not in nature's mystery more science,
Than I have in this ring: 'twas mine, 'twas Helen's,
Whoever gave it you: Then, if you know
That you are well acquainted with yourself,
Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement
You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety,
That she would never put it from her finger,

Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,
(Where you have never come,) or sent it us
Upon her great disaster.

Ber. She never saw it.

King. Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;

And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me,
Which I would fain shut out: If it should prove
That thou art so inhuman,—'twill not prove so;—
And yet I know not:—thou didst hate her deadly,
And she is dead; which nothing, but to close
Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,
More than to see this ring.—Take him away.—

[*Guards seize BERTRAM.*

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly fear'd too little.—Away with him;—
We'll sift this matter further.

Ber. If you shall prove
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,
Where yet she never was.

[*Exit BERTRAM, guarded.*

Enter a Gentleman.

King. I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

Gent. Gracious sovereign,
Whether I have been to blame, or no, I know not;
Here's a petition from a Florentine,
Who bath, for four or five removes, come short
To tender it herself. I undertook it,
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech

Of the poor suppliant, who by this, I know,
Is here attending : her business looks in her
With an importing visage ; and she told me,
In a sweet verbal brief, it did concern
Your highness with herself.

*King. [Reads.] Upon his many protestations to marry
me, when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me.
Now is the count Rousillon a widower ; his vows are for-
feited to me, and my honour's paid to him. He stole from
Florence, taking no leave, and I follow him to his country
for justice : Grant it me, O king ; in you it best lies ;
otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maid is undone.*

DIANA CAPULET.

Laf. I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll
him : for this, I'll none of him.

King. The heavens have thought well on thee, La-
feu,
To bring forth this discovery.—Seek these suitors :—
Go, speedily, and bring again the count.

[*Exeunt Gentleman, and some Attendants.*
I am afraid, the life of Helen, lady,
Was foully snatch'd.

Count. Now, justice on the doers !

Enter BERTRAM, guarded.

King. I wonder, sir, since wives are monsters to you,
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,
Yet you desire to marry.—What woman's that ?

Re-enter Gentleman, with Widow, and DIANA.

Dia. I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,
Derived from the ancient Capulet;
My suit, as I do understand, you know,
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

Wid. I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour
Both suffer under this complaint we bring,
And both shall cease, without your remedy.

King. Come hither, count; Do you know these wo-
men?

Ber. My lord, I neither can, nor will deny
But that I know them: Do they charge me further?

Dia. Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

Ber. She's none of mine, my lord.

Dia. If you shall marry,
You give away this hand, and that is mine;
You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;
You give away myself, which is known mine;
For I by vow am so embodied yours,
That she, which marries you, must marry me,
Either both, or none.

Laf. Your reputation [To BERTRAM.] comes too
short for my daughter, you are no husband for her.

Ber. My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with: let your high-
ness

Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour,
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

King. Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to
friend,
Till your deeds gain them: Fairer prove your honour,

Than in my thought it lies !

Dia. Good my lord,
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think
He had not my virginity.

King. What say'st thou to her ?
Ber. She's impudent, my lord ;
And was a common gamester to the camp.

Dia. He does me wrong, my lord ; if I were so,
He might have bought me at a common price :
Do not believe him : O, behold this ring,
Whose high respect, and rich validity,
Did lack a parallel ; yet, for all that,
He gave it to a commoner o'the camp,
If I be one.

Count. He blushes, and 'tis it :
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,
Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife ;
That ring's a thousand proofs.

King. Methought, you said,
You saw one here in court could witness it.

Dia. I did, my lord, but loath am to produce
So bad an instrument ; his name's Parolles.

Laf. I saw the man to-day, if man he be.
King. Find him, and bring him hither.

Ber. What of him ?
He's quoted for a most perfidious slave,
With all the spots o'the world tax'd and debosh'd ;
Whose nature sickens, but to speak a truth :
Am I or that, or this, for what he'll utter,
That will speak any thing ?

King. She hath that ring of yours.

Ber. I think, she has : certain it is, I lik'd her,
And boarded her i'the wanton way of youth :
She knew her distance, and did angle for me,
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,
As all impediments in fancy's course
Are motives of more fancy ; and, in fine,
Her insult coming with her modern grace,
Subdued me to her rate : she got the ring ;
And I had that, which any inferior might
At market-price have bought.

Dia. I must be patient ;
You, that turn'd off a first so noble wife,
May justly diet me. I pray you yet,
(Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband,)
Send for your ring, I will return it home,
And give me mine again.

Ber. I have it not.

King. What ring was yours, I pray you ?

Dia. Sir, much like
The same upon your finger.

King. Know you this ring ? this ring was his of late.

Dia. And this was it I gave him, being a-bed.

King. The story then goes false, you threw it him
Out of a casement.

Dia. I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES.

Ber. My lord, I do confess, the ring was hers. .

King. You boggle shrewdly, every feather starts
you.—

Is this the man you speak of ?

Dia. Ay, my lord.

King. Tell me, sirrah, but, tell me true, I charge
you,
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,
(Which, on your just proceeding, I'll keep off,)
By him, and by this woman here, what know you?

Par. So please your majesty, my master hath been
an honourable gentleman ; tricks he hath had in him,
which gentlemen have.

King. Come, come, to the purpose : Did he love
this woman ?

Par. Faith, sir, he did love her, but how ?

King. How, I pray you ?

Par. He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a
woman.

King. How is that ?

Par. He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

King. As thou art a knave, and no knave :—
What an equivocal companion is this !

Par. I am a poor man, and at your majesty's com-
mand.

Laf. He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty
orator.

Dia. Do you know, he promised me marriage ?

Par. Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

King. But wilt thou not speak all thou know'st ?

Par. Yes, so please your majesty ; I did go between
them, as I said ; but more than that, he loved her,—
for, indeed, he was mad for her, and talked of Satan,
and of limbo, and of furies, and I know not what : yet
I was in that credit with them at the time, that I knew
of their going to bed ; and of other motions, as promi-
sing her marriage, and things that would derive me

ill will to speak of, therefore I will not speak what I know.

King. Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married: But thou art too fine in the evidence; therefore stand aside.—

This ring, you say, was yours?

Dia. Ay, my good lord.

King. Where did you buy it? or who gave it you?

Dia. It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

King. Who lent it you?

Dia. It was not lent me neither.

King. Where did you find it then?

Dia. I found it not.

King. If it were yours by none of all these ways,
How could you give it him?

Dia. I never gave it him.

Laf. This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes off and on at pleasure.

King. This ring was mine, I gave it his first wife.

Dia. It might be yours, or hers, for aught I know.

King. Take her away, I do not like her now.
To prison with her: and away with him.—
Unless thou tell'st me where thou had'st this ring,
Thou diest within this hour.

Dia. I'll never tell you.

King. Take her away.

Dia. I'll put in bail, my liege.

King. I think thee now some common customer.

Dia. By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

King. Wherefore hast thou accus'd him all this while?

Dia. Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty;

He knows, I am no maid, and he'll swear to't :
 I'll swear, I am a maid, and he knows not.
 Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life ;
 I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

[*Pointing to LAFEU.*

King. She does abuse our ears ; to prison with her.

Dia. Good mother, fetch my bail.—Stay, royal sir ;

[*Exit Widow.*

The jeweller, that owes the ring, is sent for,
 And he shall surety me. But for this lord,
 Who hath abus'd me, as he knows himself,
 Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him :
 He knows himself, my bed he hath defil'd ;
 And at that time he got his wife with child :
 Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick ;
 So there's my riddle, One, that's dead, is quick :
 And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter Widow, with HELENA.

King. Is there no exorcist
 Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes ?
 Is't real, that I see ?

Hel. No, my good lord ;
 'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,
 The name, and not the thing.

Ber. Both, both ; O, pardon !

Hel. O, my good lord, when I was like this maid,
 I found you wond'rous kind. There is your ring,
 And, look you, here's your letter ; This it says,
When from my finger you can get this ring,
And are by me with child, &c.—This is done :
 Will you be mine, now you are doubly won ?

Ber. If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,

I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

Hel. If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,
Deadly divorce step between me and you!—
O, my dear mother, do I see you living?

Laf. Mine eyes smell onions, I shall weep anon:—
Good Tom Drum, [To PAROLLES.] lend me a handkerchief: So, I thank thee; wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee: Let thy courtesies alone, they are scurvy ones.

King. Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even truth in pleasure flow:—
If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower,

[To DIANA.

Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;
For I can guess, that, by thy honest aid,
Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.—
Of that, and all the progress, more and less,
Resolvedly more leisure shall express:
All yet seems well; and, if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

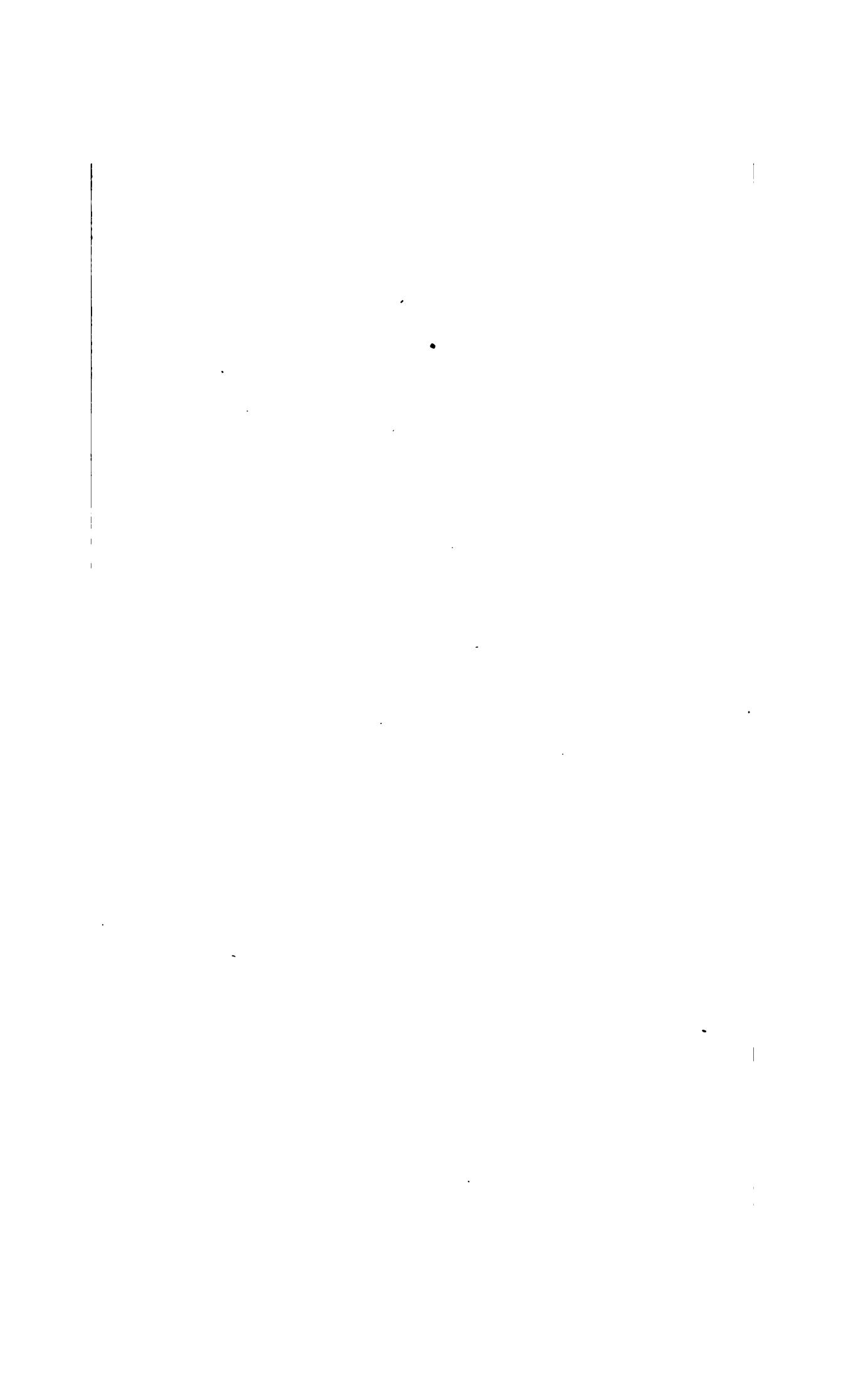
[Flourish.

Advancing.

The king's a beggar, now the play is done:
All is well ended, if this suit be won,
That you express content; which we will pay,
With strife to please you, day exceeding day:
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

[Exeunt.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Don PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.

Don JOHN, his bastard brother.

CLAUDIO, a young lord of Florence, favourite to Don PEDRO.

BENEDICK, a young lord of Padua, favourite likewise of Don PEDRO.

LEONATO, governor of Messina.

ANTONIO, his brother.

BALTHAZAR, servant to Don PEDRO.

BORACHIO, } followers of Don JOHN.

CONRADE,

DOGBERRY, } two foolish officers.

VERGES,

A Sexton.

A Friar.

A Boy.

HERO, daughter to LEONATO.

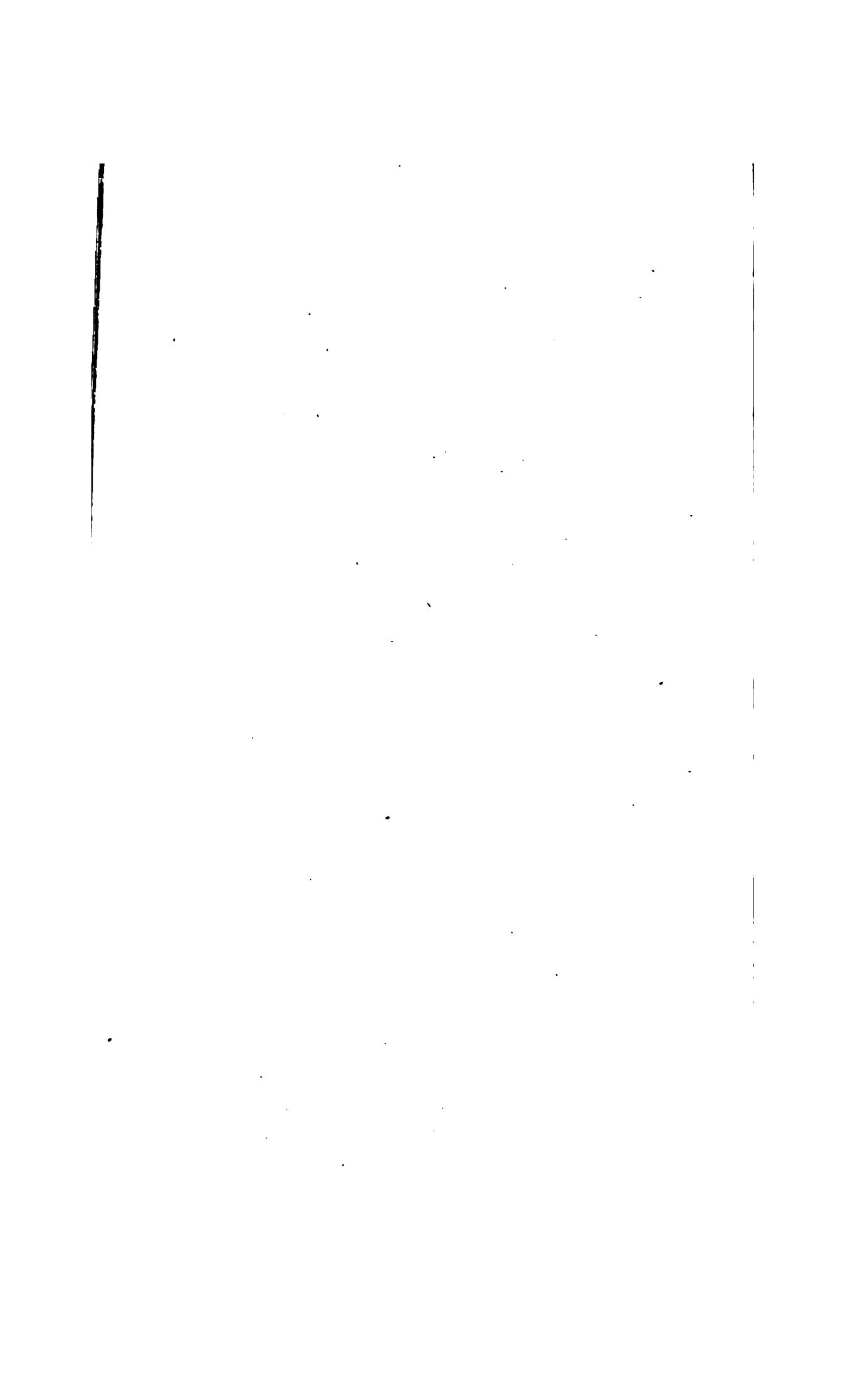
BEATRICE, niece to LEONATO.

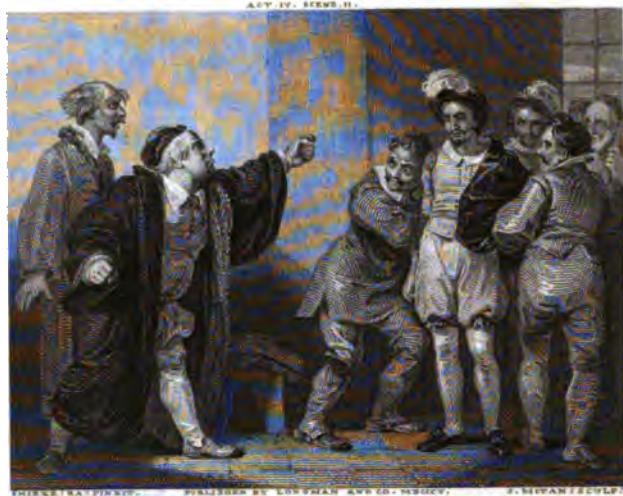
MARGARET, } gentlewomen attending on HERO.

URSULA,

Messengers, Watch, and Attendants.

SCENE, Messina.





MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others, with a Messenger.

Leon. I learn in this letter, that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off, when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro: He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age; doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion: he hath, indeed, better bettered expectation, than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness: There are no faces truer than those, that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy, than to joy at weeping?

Beat. I pray you, is signior Montanto returned from the wars, or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he, that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he is returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina, and challenged Cupid at the flight: and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt.—I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady;—But what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,—Well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt signior Benedick and her: they never meet, but there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.—Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No: an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O lord! he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

*Enter Don PEDRO, attended by BALTHAZAR and others,
Don JOHN, CLAUDIO, and BENEDICK.*

D. Pedro. Good signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but, when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly: —I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself:—Be happy, lady! for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders, for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder, that you will still be talking, signior Benedick; no body marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible, disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat:—But it is certain, I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart, that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would, my horse had the speed of your tongue; and so good a continuer: But keep your way o' God's name; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.

D. Pedro. This is the sum of all: Leonato,—signior Claudio, and signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him, we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays, some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.—Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

D. John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together. [Exeunt all but BENEDICK and CLAUDIO.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have

me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i'faith, methinks she is too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her; that were she other than she is, she were un-handsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest, I am in sport; I pray thee, tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack; to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady, that ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope, you have no intent to turn husband; have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is it come to this, i'faith? Hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i'faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke,

wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter Don PEDRO.

D. Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would, your grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance,—mark you this, on my allegiance:—He is in love. With who? now that is your grace's part.—Mark, how short his answer is:—With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

D. Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion,

that fire cannot melt out of me: I will die in it at the stake.

D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretick in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldric, all women shall pardon me: Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will live a bachelor.

D. Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove, that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

D. Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me; and he, that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam.

D. Pedro. Well as time shall try:

In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted;

and in such great letters as they write, *Here is good horse to hire*, let them signify under my sign—*Here you may see Benedick, the married man*.

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldest be horn-mad.

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quivers in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

D. Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the mean time, good signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's; commend me to him, and tell him, I will not fail him at supper; for, indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of God: From my house, (if I had it,)—

D. Pedro. The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not: The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience; and so I leave you.

[*Exit BENEDICK.*]

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

D. Pedro. My love is thine to teach; teach it but how,

And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson, that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

D. Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir:
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love :
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words :
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it :
And I will break with her, and with her father,
And thou shalt have her : Was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story ?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion !
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than
the flood ?
The fairest grant is the necessity :
Look, what will serve, is fit : 'tis once, thou lov'st ;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know, we shall have revelling to-night ;
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio ;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale :
Then, after, to her father will I break ;

And, the conclusion is, she shall be thine :
In practice let us put it presently. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A room in LEONATO's house.*

Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO.

Leon. How now, brother ? Where is my cousin, your son ? Hath he provided this musick ?

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news, that you yet dreamed not of.

Leon. Are they good ?

Ant. As the event stamps them ; but they have a good cover, they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in my orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine : The prince discovered to Claudio, that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance ; and, if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit, that told you this ?

Ant. A good sharp fellow : I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no ; we will hold it as a dream, till it appear itself :—but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you, and tell her of it. [Several persons cross the stage.] Cousins, you know what you have to do.—O, I cry you mercy, friend ; you go with me, and I will use your skill :—Good cousins, have a care this busy time. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*Another room in LEONATO's house.*

Enter Don JOHN and CONRADE.

Con. What the goujere, my lord ! why are you thus out of measure sad ?

D. John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds it, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

D. John. And, when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it ?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

D. John. I wonder, that thou, being (as thou say'st thou art) born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad, when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests ; eat, when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure ; sleep, when I am drowsy, and tend to no man's business ; laugh, when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this, till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace ; where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

D. John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace ; and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any : in this, though I cannot be said to be a flat-

tering honest man, it must not be denied, that I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage: If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

D. John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here? What news, Borachio?

Enter BORACHIO.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the prince, your brother, is royally entertained by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

D. John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

D. John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

D. John. A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

D. John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Bora. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand and hand, in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras; and there heard it agreed upon,

that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and, having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

D. John. Come, come, let us thither; this may prove food to my displeasure: that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way: You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

D. John. Let us to the great supper; their cheer is the greater, that I am subdued: 'Would the cook were of my mind!—Shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bors. We'll wait upon your lordship. *Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others.

Leon. Was not count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him, but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man, that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other, too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then, half signior Benedick's tongue in count John's mouth, and half count John's melancholy in signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith, she is too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way: for it is said, *God sends a curst cow short horns*; but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband ; for the which blessing, I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord ! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face ; I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband, that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him ? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting gentle-woman ? He, that hath a beard, is more than a youth ; and he, that hath no beard, is less than a man : and he, that is more than a youth, is not for me ; and he, that is less than a man, I am not for him : Therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-herd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leo. Well then, go you into hell ?

Beat. No ; but to the gate ; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, *Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven ; here's no place for you maids :* so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens ; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. Well, niece, [To Hero.] I trust, you will be ruled by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith ; it is my cousin's duty to make courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please you* :—but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please me.*

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember, what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the musick, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him, there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For hear me, Hero; Wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure full of state and antiquity; and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by day-light.

Leon. The revellers are entering; brother, make good room.

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR ; Don JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, URSULA, and others, masked.

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and, especially, when I walk away.

D. Pedro. With me in your company ?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so ?

Hero. When I like your favour ; for God defend, the lute should be like the case !

D. Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof ; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then your visor should be thatch'd.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

[*Takes her aside.*

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake ; for I have many ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one ?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Bene. I love you the better ; the hearers may cry, Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer !

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight, when the dance is done !—Answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words ; the clerk is answered.

Urs. I know you well enough : you are signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the wagging of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man : Here's his dry hand up and down ; you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come ; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? Can virtue hide itself ? Go to, mum, you are he : graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so ?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are ?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful,—and that I had my good wit out of the *Hundred merry Tales* ;—Well, this was signior Benedick, that said so.

Bene. What's he ?

Beat. I am sure, you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh ?

Bene. I pray you, what is he ?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester : a very dull fool ; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders : none but libertines delight in him ; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy ; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him : I am sure, he is in the fleet ; I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do : he'll but break a comparison or two on me ; which, peradventure, not marked, or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy ; and then there's a partridge' wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. [Musick within.] We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

[Dance. Then excut all but *Don JOHN, BORACHIO, and CLAUDIO.*

D. John. Sure, my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it : The ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio ; I know him by his bearing.

D. John. Are not you signior Benedick ?

Claud. You know me well ; I am he.

D. John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love : he is enamoured on Hero ; I pray you, dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her ?

D. John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too ; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

D. John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[Excut *Don JOHN and BORACHIO.*

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick, But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.—

'Tis certain so ;—the prince wooes for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love :
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues ;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent : for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not : Farewell, therefore, Hero !

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio ?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me ?

Claud. Whither ?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of ? About your neck, like an usurer's chain ? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero .

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover ; so they sell bullocks. But did you think, the prince would have served you thus ?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho ! now you strike like the blind man ; 'twas the boy, that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [Exit.]

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl ! Now will he creep into sedges.—But, that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me ! The prince's fool !—Ha ! it may be, I go under that title, because I am merry.—

Yea; but so; I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed: it is the base, the bitter disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don PEDRO, HERO, and LEONATO.

D. Pedro. Now, signior, where's the count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren; I told him, and, I think, I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

D. Pedro. To be whipped! What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy; who, being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss, the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself; and the rod he might have bestow'd on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's nest.

D. Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

D. Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you;

the gentleman, that danced with her, told her, she is much wronged by you.

Bene. O, she misused me past the endurance of a block; an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her: my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her: She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester; that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance, upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me: She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit; yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her; you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel. I would to God, some scholar would conjure her; for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Re-enter CLAUDIO and BEATRICE.

D. Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard; do

you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy : You have no employment for me ?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not ; I cannot endure my lady Tongue. [Exit.

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come ; you have lost the heart of signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me a while ; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one : marry, once before, he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say, I have lost it.

D. Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count ? wherefore are you sad ?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

D. Pedro. How then ? Sick ?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well : but civil, count; civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

D. Pedro. I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true ; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won ; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained : name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy !

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her

my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much.—Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let him not speak, neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care:—My cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good lord, for alliance!—Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burned; I may sit in a corner, and cry, heigh ho! for a husband.

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your grace is too costly to wear every day:—But, I beseech your grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cry'd; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.—

Cousins, God give you joy !

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle.—By your grace's pardon.

[*Exit BEATRICE.*]

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord : she is never sad, but when she sleeps ; and not ever sad then ; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing.

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means ; she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D. Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church ?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord : Time goes on crutches, till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night ; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing ; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us ; I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours ; which is, to bring signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other. I would fain have it a match ; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three

will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

D. Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know: thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick:—and I, with your two helps, will so practice on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Room in LEONATO's House.*

Enter Don JOHN and BORACHIO.

D. John. It is so; the count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

D. John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

D. John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think, I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

D. John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

D. John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother; spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

D. John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato: Look you for any other issue?

D. John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour anything.

Bora. Go then, find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the count Claudio, alone: tell them, that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match; and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,—that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber-window; hear me

call Margaret, Hero ; hear Margaret term me Borachio ; and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding : for, in the mean time, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent ; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

D. John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice : Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

D. John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—LEONATO'S GARDEN.

Enter BENEDICK and a Boy.

Bene. Boy,—

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book ; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Bene. I know that ;—but I would have thee hence, and here again. [Exit Boy.]—I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love : And such a man is Claudio. I have known, when there was no music with him but the drum and fife ; and now had

he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known, when he would have walked ten mile afoot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man, and a soldier; and now is he turn'd orthographer; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair; yet I am well: another is wise; yet I am well: another virtuous; yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

[Withdraws.

Enter Don PEDRO, LEONATO, and CLAUDIO.

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?

Claud. Yea, my good lord:—How still the evening is,

As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

D. Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Claud. O, very well, my lord: the music ended, We'll fit the kid-fox with a penny-worth.

Enter BALTHAZAR, with musick.

D. Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice To slander musick any more than once.

D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency, To put a strange face on his own perfection :— I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing : Since many a wooper doth commence his suit To her he thinks not worthy ; yet he woos ; Yet will he swear, he loves.

D. Pedro. Nay, pray thee, come : Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument, Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes, There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

D. Pedro. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks ; .

Note, notes, forsooth, and noting ! [Musick.]

Bene. Now, *Divine air !* now is his soul ravished !— Is it not strange, that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies ?—Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

BALTHAZAR sings.

I.

Balth. *Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,*
Men were deceivers ever ;
One foot in sea, and one on shore ;
To one thing constant never :

*Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blyth and bonny ;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into, Hey nonny, nonny.*

II.

*Sing no more ditties, sing no mo
Of dumps so dull and heavy :
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so, &c.*

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

D. Pedro. Ha? no; no, faith; thou singest well enough for a shift.

Bene. [Aside.] An he had been a dog, that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him: and, I pray God, his bad voice bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

D. Pedro. Yea, marry; [To CLAUDIO.]—Dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee, get us some excellent musick; for to-morrow night we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

D. Pedro. Do so: farewell. [Exeunt BALTHAZAR and musick.] Come hither, Leonato: What was it you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with signior Benedick?

Claud. O, ay:—Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits.

[*Aside to PEDRO.*] I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful, that she should so dote on signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

[*Aside.*]

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that she loves him with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought.

D. Pedro. May be, she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. 'Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit! There never was counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion, as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

[*Aside.*]

Leon. What effects, my lord! She will sit you,— You heard my daughter tell you how

Claud. She did, indeed.

D. Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bene. [*Aside.*] I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide itself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en the infection; hold it up.

[*Aside.*]

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: *Shall I*, says she, *that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?*

Leon. This says she now, when she is beginning to write to him: for she'll be up twenty times a night; and there will she sit in her smock, till she have writ a sheet of paper:—my daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O!—When she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?—

Claud. That.

Leon. O! she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her: *I measure him*, says she, *by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should.*

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses;—*O sweet Benedick!—God give me patience!*

Leon. She doth indeed; my daughter says so: and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometime afraid she will do a desperate outrage to herself; It is very true.

D. Pedro. It were good, that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end ? He would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him : She's an excellent sweet lady ; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

D. Pedro. In every thing, but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one, that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

D. Pedro. I would, she had bestowed this dotage on me ; I would have daff'd all other respects, and made her half myself : I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you ?

Claud. Hero thinks surely, she will die : for she says, she will die, if he love her not ; and she will die, ere she makes her love known ; and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will 'bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

D. Pedro. She doth well : if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it ; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

D. Pedro. He hath, indeed, a good outward happiness.

Claud. 'Fore God, and, in my mind, very wise.

D. Pedro. He doth, indeed, show some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

D. Pedro. As Hector, I assure you : and in the ma-

naging of quarrels you may see he is wise ; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, he must necessarily keep peace ; if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D. Pedro. And so will he do ; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him, by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece : Shall we go see Benedick, and tell him of her love ?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord ; let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible ; she may wear her heart out first.

D. Pedro. Well, we'll hear further of it by your daughter ; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well ; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk ? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation. [Aside.]

D. Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her ; and that must your daughter and her gentle-woman carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter ; that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner. [Aside.]

[*Exeunt Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO.*]

BENEDICK advances from the Arbour.

Bene. This can be no trick: The conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems, her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to marry:—I must not seem proud:—Happy are they, that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say, the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous;—'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me:—By my troth, it is no addition to her wit;—nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her.—I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age: Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No: The world must be peopled. When I said, I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.—Here comes Beatrice: By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice; I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me ; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure in the message?

Beat Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal :—You have no stomach, signior ; fare you well. [Exit.

Bene. Ha ! *Against my will, I am sent to bid you come to dinner*—there's a double meaning in that. *I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me*—that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks :—If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain ; if I do not love her, I am a Jew : I will go get her picture. [Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—LEONATO'S GARDEN.

Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee into the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the Prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say, that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honey-suckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter;—like favourites,
Make proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power, that bred it:—there will she hide
her,

To listen our purpose: This is thy office;
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently.

[*Exit.*]

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick:
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit:
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice: Of this matter

Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay. Now begin;

Enter BEATRICE, behind.

For look, where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture:
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing

Of the false sweet bait, that we lay for it.—

[*They advance to the bower.*

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;
I know, her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

Urs. But are you sure,
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it:
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O God of love! I know, he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man:

But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice :
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on ; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak : she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

Urs. Sure, I think so ;
And therefore, certainly, it were not good,
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth : I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward : If fair faced,
She'd swear, the gentleman should be her sister ;
If black, why, nature, drawing of an antick,
Made a foul blot : if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
If low, an agate very vilely cut :
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out ;
And never gives to truth and virtue that,
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable..

Hero. No : not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable :
But who dare tell her so ? If I should speak,
She'd mock me into air ; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks ;

Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs. Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion:
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders,
To stain my cousin with: One doth not know,
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is priz'd to have,) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy; signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.
Urs. His excellency did earn it, ere he had it.—
When are you married, madam?

Hero. Why, every day;—to-morrow: Come, go in;
I'll show thee some attires; and have thy counsel,
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urs. She's lim'd, I warrant you; we have caught her,
madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps,

[*Exeunt HERO and URSULA.*

BEATRICE advances.

Beat. What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and, maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band:
For others say, thou dost deserve; and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [Exit.]

SCENE II.—*A room in LEONATO's house.*

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and LEONATO.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then I go toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat, and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him: he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks, you are sadder.

Claud. I hope, he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant; there's no true drop

of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the tooth-ach?

Leon. Where is but a humour, or a worm?

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day; a Frenchman to-morrow; or in the shape of two countries at once, as, a German from the waist downward, all slops; and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet: Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: he brushes his hat o' mornings; What should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him: and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet: Can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, The sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lutestring, and now governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too; I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ach.—Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Excunt BENEDICK and LEONATO.*

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so: Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice: and then the two bears will not bite one another, when they meet.

Enter Don JOHN.

D. John. My lord and brother, God save you.

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

D. John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

D. John. If it please you;—yet count Claudio may hear: for what I would speak of, concerns him.

D. Pedro. What's the matter?

D. John. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?
[To Claudio.]

D. Pedro. You know, he does.

D. John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you, discover it.

D. John. You may think, I love you not; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest: For my brother, I think, he holds you well; and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage: surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

D. John. I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shortened, (for she hath been too long a talking of,) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who? Hero?

D. John. Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

D. John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say, she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not, till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered; even the night be-

fore her wedding-day ; if you love her then, to-morrow wed her ; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so ?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

D. John. If you dare not trust that, you see, confess not that, you know : if you will follow me, I will show you enough ; and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow ; in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

D. John. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses ; bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned !

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting !

D. John. O plague right well prevented !

So will you say, when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter Dogberry and Verges, with the Watch.

Dogb. Are you good men, and true ?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

1 Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal: God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

2 Watch. Both which, master constable,—

Dogb. You have; I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear, when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern: This is your charge; You shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

2 Watch. How if he will not stand?

Dogb. Why then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects:—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk, is most tolerable, and not to be endured.

2 Watch. We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen: —Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

2 Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then, let them alone till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

2 Watch. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man: and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2 Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will; much more a man, who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

2 Watch. How if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for the ewe, that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You, constable, are to present the prince's own person; if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by'r lady, that, I think, he cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing: for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By'r lady, I think, it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night.—Come, neighbour.

2 Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to-bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours: I pray you, watch about signior Leonato's door; for the weding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night: Adieu, be vigilant, I beseech you.

[*Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES.*

Enter BORACHIO and CONRADE.

Bora. What! Conrade,—

Watch. Peace, stir not. [*Aside.*]

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought, there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain: and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [Aside.] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible, that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Thou should'st rather ask, if it were possible any villainy should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows, thou art unconfirmed: Thou knowest, that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say, the fool's the fool. But see'st thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know that Deformed; he has been a vile thief this seven year; he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot

bloods, between fourteen and five and thirty? sometime, fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting; sometime, like god Bel's priests in the old church window; sometime, like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-piece seems as massy as his club?

Con. All this I see; and see, that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man: But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither; but know, that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee, how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they, Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw over-night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 *Watch.* We charge you in the prince's name, stand.

2 *Watch.* Call up the right master constable: We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery, that ever was known in the commonwealth.

1 Watch. And one Deformed is one of them ; I know him, he wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters.

2 Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters,—

1 Watch. Never speak ; we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in LEONATO's House.*

Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [Exit URSULA.

Marg. Troth, I think, your other rabato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, it's not so good ; and I warrant, your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another ; I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner : and your gown's a most rare fashion, i'faith. I saw the duchess of Milan's gown, that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth it's but a night-gown in respect of yours: Cloth of gold, and cuts, and laced with silver; set with pearls, down sleeves, side-sleeves, and skirts round, underborne with a blueish tinsel: but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy!

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon, by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fye upon thee! art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think, you would have me say, saving your reverence,—*a husband*: an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend no body: Is there any harin in—*the heavier for a husband*? None, I think, an it be the right husband, and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy: Ask my lady Beatrice else, here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now! do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap us into—*Light o' love*; that goes without a burden; do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, *Light o' love*, with your heels!—then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegitimate construction ! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin ; 'tis time you were ready. By my troth I am exceeding ill :—hey ho !

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband ?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow ?

Marg. Nothing I ; but God send every one their heart's desire !

Hero. These gloves the count sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuffed ! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me ! God help me ! how long have you profess'd apprehension ?

Marg. Ever since you left it : doth not my wit become me rarely ?

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap.—By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distilled *Carduus Benedictus*, and lay it to your heart ; it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus ! why Benedictus ? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Marg. Moral ? no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning ; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love : nay, by'r lady,

I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted, I know not; but methinks, you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this, that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw; the prince, the count, signor Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [Exit.]

SCENE V.—*Another Room in LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, with DOGBERRY and VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see, 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest, as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: *palabras*, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me! ha!

Dogb. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis: for I hear as good exclamation on your worship, as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out; God help us! it is a world to see!—Well said, i'faith, neighbour Verges:—well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind:—An honest soul, i'faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread: but, God is to be worshipped: All men are not alike; alas good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts, that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir: our watch, sir, have, indeed, comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me; I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well:

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I will wait upon them; I am ready.

[*Exeunt LEONATO and Messenger.*]

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol; we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here's that [*Touching his forehead.*] shall drive some of them to a *non com*: only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The inside of a Church.*

Enter Don PEDRO, Don JOHN, LEONATO, Friar, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, and BEATRICE, &c.

Leon. Come, friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do! not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? Why, then some be of laughing, as, ha! ha! he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar:—Father, by your leave;

Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose
worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.—

There, Leonato, take her back again ;
Give not this rotten orange to your friend ;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour :—
Behold, how like a maid she blushes here :
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal !
Comes not that blood, as modest evidence,
To witness simple virtue ? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows ? But she is none :
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed :
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord ?

Claud. Not to be married,
Not knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity,—

Claud. I know what you would say ; If I have known
her,
You'll say, she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin :
No, Leonato,

I never tempted her with word too large ;
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you ?

Claud. Out on thy seeming ! I will write against it :
You seem to me as Dian in her orb ;
As chaste as is the bud, ere it be blown :
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals,
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide ?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you ?

D. Pedro. What should I speak ?

I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken ? or do I but dream ?

D. John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are
true.

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.

Hero. True, O God !

Claud. Leonato, stand I here ?
Is this the prince ? Is this the prince's brother ?
Is this face Hero's ? Are our eyes our own ?

Leon. All this is so ; But what of this, my lord ?

Claud. Let me but move one question to your daugh-
ter ;

And, by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O God defend me ! how am I beset !—

What kind of catechizing call you this ?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero;
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden.—*Leonato,*
I am sorry you must hear; Upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window;
Who hath, indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

D. John. Fye, fye! they are
Not to be nam'd, my lord, not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them: Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts, and counsels of thy heart!
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eye-lids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

[*HERO swoons.*

Beat. Why, how now, cousin? wherefore sink you down?

D. John. Come, let us go: these things, come thus to light,

Smother her spirits up.

[*Exeunt Don PEDRO, Don JOHN, and CLAUDIO.*

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think;—help, uncle;—Hero! why, Hero!—Uncle!—Signior Benedict!—friar!

Leon. O fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
Death is the fairest cover for her shame,
That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero?

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea; Wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing

Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story, that is printed in her blood?—
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou would'st not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not, with charitable hand,
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates;
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,
I might have said, *No part of it is mine*,

This shame derives itself from unknown loins?
But mine, and mine, I lov'd, and mine, I prais'd,
And mine, that I was proud on; mine so much,
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her; why, she—O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink! that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little, which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh!

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient:
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No, truly, not; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie?
Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? hence from her; let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions start
Into her face; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness bear away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors, that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth:—Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading, nor my observations,

Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book : trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be :
Thou seest, that all the grace, that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury ; she not denies it :
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That, which appears in proper nakedness ?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know, that do accuse me; I know none :
If I know more of any man alive,
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy !—O my father,
Prove you, that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the prin-
ces.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour ;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leon. I know not ; If they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her ; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havock of my means,

Nor my bad life left me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awak'd in such a kind,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause a while,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead ;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeed :
Maintain a mourning ostentation ;
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites,
That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this ? What will this
do ?

Friar. Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse ; that is some good :
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied and excus'd,
Of every hearer : For it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enjoy it ; but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value ; then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours :—So will it fare with Claudio :
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination ;

And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving-delicate, and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she liv'd indeed :—then shall he mourn,
 (If ever love had interest in his liver,)
 And wish he had not so accus'd her;
 No, though he thought his accusation true.
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
 But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
 The supposition of the lady's death
 Will quench the wonder of her infamy :
 And, if it sort not well, you may conceal her
 (As best befits her wounded reputation,)
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you :
 And though, you know, my inwardness and love
 Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
 As secretly, and justly, as your soul
 Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
 The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented ; presently away ;
 For to strange sores strangely they strain the
 cure.—
 Come, lady, die to live : this wedding day,
 Perhaps, is but prolong'd ; have patience, and
 endure.

[*Excunt Friar, Hero, and LEONATO.*

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me, that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you; Is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not: It were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing:—I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it, that says, I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it: I protest, I love thee.

Beat. Why then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have staid me in a happy hour; I was about to protest, I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it: Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here;—There is no love in you:—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height of a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman?—O, that I were a man!—What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then with publick accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice:—

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?—a proper saying!

Bene. Nay but, Beatrice;—

Beat. Sweet Hero!—She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes, and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count-confect; a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had

any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it:—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice: By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engaged, I will challenge him; I will kiss your hand, and so leave you: By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account: As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say, she is dead; and so, farewell. [Exit].

SCENE II.—*A Prison.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, and Sexton, in Gowns; and the Watch, with Conrade and Borachio.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—
What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray, write down—Borachio.—Yours,
sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Con-
rade.

Dogb. Write down—master gentleman Conrade—
Masters, do you serve God?

Con. Bora. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down—that they hope they serve God :—
and write God first; for God defend but God should
go before such villains!—Masters, it is proved already
that you are little better than false knaves; and it will
go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for
yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but
I will go about with him.—Come you hither, sirrah;
a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you
are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside.—'Fore God, they are both
in a tale: Have you writ down—that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to ex-
amine; you must call forth the watch, that are their
accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the eftest way:—Let the
watch come forth:—Masters, I charge you, in the
prince's name, accuse these men.

1 Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John, the
prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down—prince John a villain: Why this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother—villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 Watch. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 Watch. And that count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and, upon the grief of this, suddenly died.—Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's; I will go before, and show him their examination.

[Exit.]

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned.

Verg. Let them be in band.

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let him write down—the prince's officer, coxcomb.—Come, bind them:—Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away ! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place ? Dost thou not suspect my years ?—O that he were here to write me down—an' ass !—but, masters, remember, that I am an ass ; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass :—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow ; and, which is more, an officer ; and, which is more, a householder ; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina ; and one that knows the law, go to ; and a rich fellow enough, go to ; and a fellow that hath had losses ; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him :—Bring him away. O, that I had been writ down—an ass !

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Before LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO.

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom, thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve : give not me counsel ;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one, whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father, that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience ;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain ;
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form :
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard ;
Cry—sorrow, wag ! and hem, when he should groan ;
Patch grief with proverbs ; make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters ; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man : For, brother, men
Can counsel, and speak comfort to that grief,
Which they themselves not feel ; but, tasting it,

Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ach with air, and agony with words:
No, no: 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those, that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself: Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace: I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those, that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so:
My soul doth tell me, Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them, that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don PEDRO and CLAUDIO.

Ant. Here comes the prince, and Claudio, hastily.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords,—

D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord!—well, fare you well,
my lord:—

Are you so hasty now?—well, all is one.

D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him ?

Leon. Marry,
Thou, thou dost wrong me ; thou dissembler, thou :—
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear :
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me :
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool ;
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old : Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by ;
And, with grey hairs, and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say, thou hast belied mine innocent child ;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors :
O ! in a tomb, where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villainy.

Claud. My villainy !

Leon. Thine, Claudio ; thine I say.

D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare ;
Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustyhood.

Claud. Away; I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child;

If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed;
But that's no matter; let him kill one first;—
Win me and wear me,—let him answer me,—
Come, follow me, boy; come, boy, follow me:
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself: God knows, I lov'd my niece;

And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains;
That dare as well answer a man, indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue:
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops!—

Leon. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content; What, man! I know them,
yea,

And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-mong'ring boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antickly, and show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter;

Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.

My heart is sorry for your daughter's death ;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing.
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord,—

D. Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No ?

Brother, away :—I will be heard.

Ant. And shall,
Or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO.*

Enter BENEDICK.

D. Pedro. See, see ; here comes the man, we went
to seek.

Claud. Now, signior ! what news !

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, signior : You are almost come
to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snap-
ped off with two old men without teeth.

D. Pedro. Leonato and his brother : What think'st
thou ? Had we fought, I doubt, we should have been
too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I
came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee ;
for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have
it beaten away : Wilt thou use thy wit ?

Bene. It is in my scabbard : Shall I draw it ?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side ?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have

been beside their wit.—I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw, to pleasure us.

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale:—Art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What! courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me:—I pray you, choose another subject.

Claud. Nay, then give him another staff; this last was broke cross.

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more; I think, he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain;—I jest not:—I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare:—Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you: Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

D. Pedro. What, a feast? a feast?

Claud. I'faith, I thank him; he hath bid me to a calf's head and a capon; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say, my knife's naught.—Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day: I said, thou hadst a fine wit; *True*, says

she, *a fine little one*: No, said I, *a great gross one*: Nay, said I, *a good wit*; Just, said she, *it hurts no body*; Nay, said I, *the gentleman is wise*; Certain, said she, *a wise gentleman*: Nay, said I, *he hath the tongues*; That I believe, said she, *for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning*; there's *a double tongue*; there's *two tongues*. Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues; yet, at last, she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said, she cared not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly: the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all; and moreover, *God saw him when he was hid in the garden*.

D. Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, *Here dwells Benedick, the married man*?

Bene. Fare you well, boy; you know my mind; I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not.—My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company: your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina: you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady: For my lord Lack-beard, there, he and I shall meet; and till then, peace be with him. [Exit BENEDICK.]

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee ?

Claud. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit !

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and the Watch, with CONRADE and BOBACHIO.

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape : but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

D. Pedro. But, soft you, let be ; pluck up, my heart, and be sad ! Did he not say, my brother was fled ?

Dogb. Come, you, sir ; if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance : nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

D. Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound ! Borachio, one !

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done ?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report ; moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondarily, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady ; thirdly, they have verified unjust things : and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D. Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done ; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence ; sixth and lastly, why they are committed ; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division ; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

D. Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that

you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood: What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer; do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night, over-heard me confessing to this man, how Don John, your brother, incensed me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her: my villainy they have upon record; which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame: the lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison, whiles he utter'd it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

D. Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery:— And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear In the rare semblance, that I loved it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs; by this time our Sexton hath reformed signior Leonato of the matter: And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master signior Leonato, and the Sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, with the Sexton.

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes; That when I note another man like him, I may avoid him: Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave, that with thy breath hast kill'd

Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain; thou bely'st thyself; Here stand a pair of honourable men, A third is fled, that had a hand in it:— I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death; Record it with your high and worthy deeds; 'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience, Yet I must speak: Choose your revenge yourself; Impose me to what penance your invention Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not, But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I; And yet, to satisfy this good old man, I would bend under any heavy weight, That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live, That were impossible; but, I pray you both, Possess the people in Messina here How innocent she died; and, if your love Can labour aught in sad invention,

Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones; sing it to night:—
To-morrow morning come you to my house;
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us;
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O, noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming;
To-night I take my leave.—This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not;
Nor knew not what she did, when she spoke to me;
But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir, (which, indeed, is not under white and black,) this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment: And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed: they say, he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it; and borrows money in God's name; the which he hath used so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake: Pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth: and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation!

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship; which, I beseech your worship, to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship; I wish your worship well; God restore you to health: I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it.—Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt Dogberry, Verges, and Watch.*

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords; we look for you to-morrow.

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt Don PEDRO and ClAUDIO.*

Leon. Bring you these fellows on; we'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LEONATO'S Garden.

Enter BENEDICK and MARGARET, meeting.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And your's as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice: I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice; and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who, I think, hath legs. [Exit MARGARET.

Bene. And therefore will come.

The god of love, [Singing.]
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean in singing; but in loving,—Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self, in love: Marry, I cannot show

it in rhyme ; I have tried ; I can find out no rhyme to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhyme ; for *scorn*, *horn*, a hard rhyme ; for *school*, *fool*, a babbling rhyme ; very ominous endings : No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.—

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, would'st thou come when I called thee ?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then !

Beat. Then, is spoken ; fare you well now :—and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words ; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome ; therefore I will depart unkissed.

Bene. Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit : But, I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge ; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ?

Beat. For them all together ; which maintained so politick a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me ?

Bene. Suffer love ; a good epithet ! I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think ; alas ! poor heart !

If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that, which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty, that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance,. Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours: if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument, than the bell rings, and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question?—Why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum: Therefore it is most expedient for the wise, (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary,) to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself: So much for praising myself, (who, I myself will bear witness, is praise-worthy,) and now tell me, How doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you.

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend: there will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle; yonder's old coil at home: it is proved, my lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be

buried in thy eyes ; and, moreover, I will go with thee
to thy uncle's. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—*The inside of a Church.*

*Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and attendants, with music
and tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato ?

Atten. It is, my lord.

Claud. [Reads from a scroll.]

*Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies :
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame, which never dies :
So the life, that died with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.*

Hang thou there upon the tomb, [affixing it.
Praising her when I am dumb.—

Now, musick, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

SONG.

*Pardon, Goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight ;
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, assist our moan ;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily :
Graves, yawn, and yield your dead,*

*Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.*

Claud. Now, unto thy bones good night!
Yearly will I do this rite.

D. Pedro. Good Morrow, masters; put your torches
out:

The wolves have prey'd; and, look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about

Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey:
Thanks to you all, and leave us; fare you well.

Claud. Good Morrow, masters; each his several way.

D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other
weeds;

And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claud. And, Hymen, now with luckier issue speed's,
Than this, for whom we render'd up this woe!

[*Excunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Room in LEONATO's House.*

*Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE,
URSULA, Friar, and HERO.*

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accus'd her,
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this;
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd

To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves;
And, when I send for you, come hither mask'd:
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me:—You know your office, brother;
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio. [Exit Ladies.]

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance..

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, signior?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me, one of them.—
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her; 'Tis most true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince; But what's your will?

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the estate of honourable marriage;—
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.

Here comes the prince, and Claudio.

Enter Don PEDRO and CLAUDIO, with attendants.

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio;
We here attend you; Are you yet determin'd
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the friar ready.

[Exit ANTONIO.]

D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick: Why, what's
the matter,

That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claud. I think, he thinks upon the savage bull:—
Tush, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee;
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low;
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked.

Claud. For this I owe you: here come other reckon-
ings.

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why, then she's mine: Sweet, let me see your
face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar;
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero. And when I lived, I was your other wife:

[*Unmasking.*]

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero?

Hero. Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am a maid.

D. Pedro. The former Hero! Hero, that is dead!

Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander liv-
ed.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify;
When, after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Mean time, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar.—Which is Beatrice?

Beat. I answer to that name; [*Unmasking.*]

What is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. No, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and
Claudio,

Have been deceived; for they swore, you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. No, no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,
Are much deceiv'd: for they did swear, you did.

Bene. They swore, that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore, that you were well-nigh dead for
me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter:—Then, you do not love
me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentle-
man.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't, that he loves her;

For here's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our
hearts!—Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I
take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you;—but, by this good day,
I yield upon great persuasion; and, partly, to save your
life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth.—

[Kissing her.]

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married
man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-
crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: Dost thou
think, I care for a satire, or an epigram? No: if a man
will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing hand-
some about him: In brief, since I do propose to marry,
I will think nothing to any purpose, that the world can
say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what
I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and
this is my conclusion.—For thy part, Claudio, I did
think to have beaten thee; but in that thou art like to
be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped, thou wouldest have denied
Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy
single life, to make thee a double dealer; which, out of
question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look ex-
ceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends:—let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore, play, music.— Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight, And brought with armed men back to Messina.

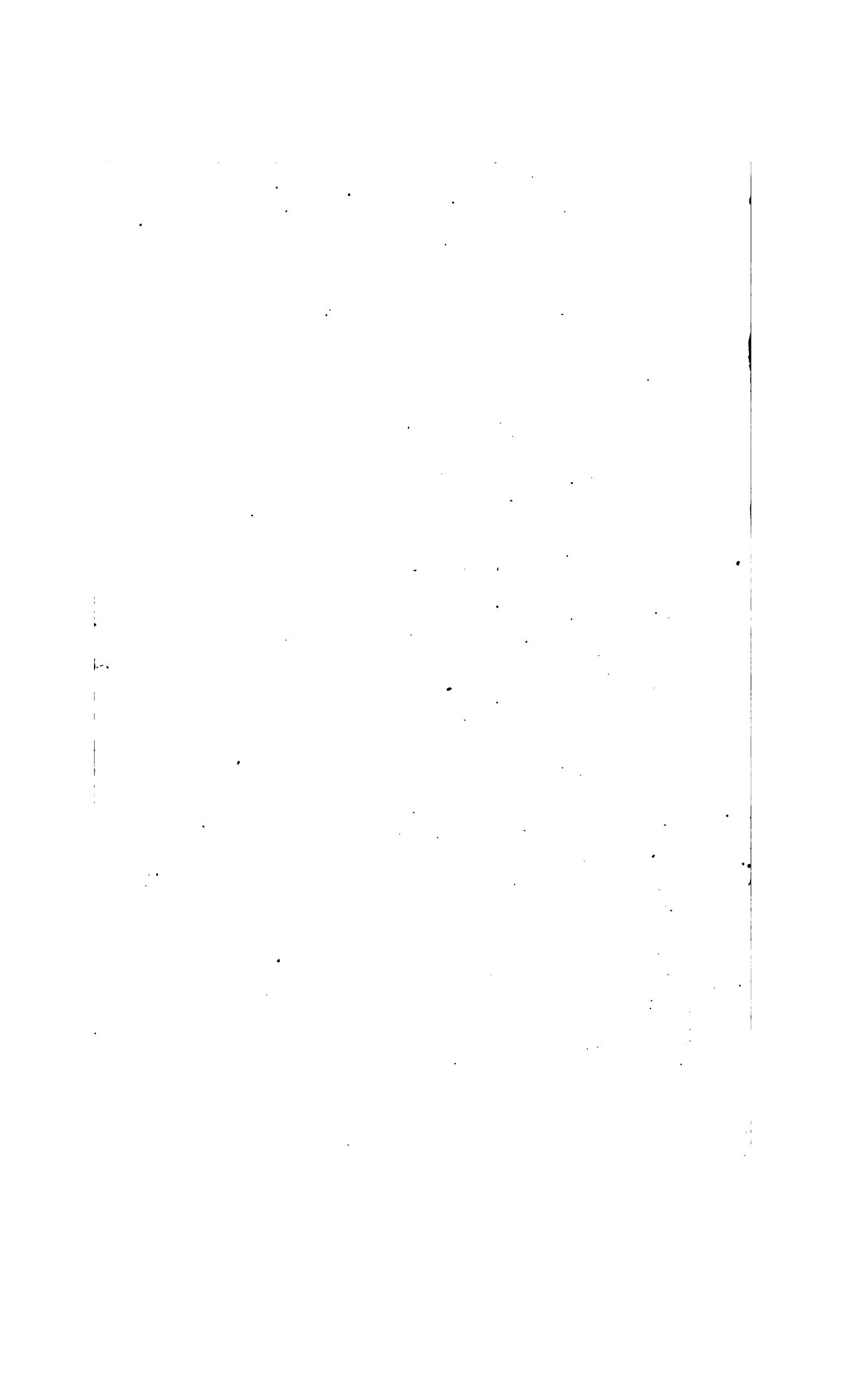
Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow; I'll devise thee brave punishments for him.—Strike up, pipers.

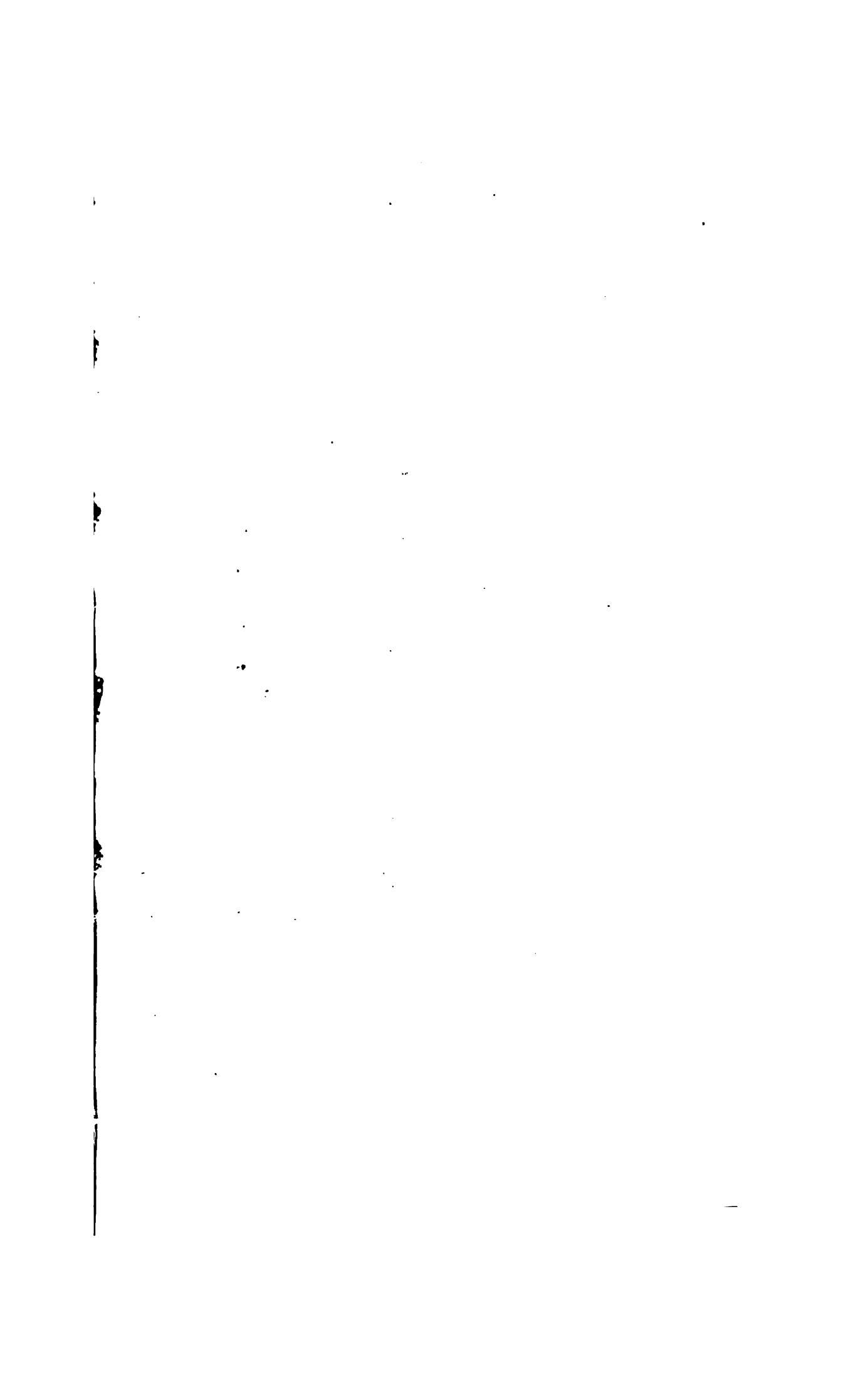
[*Dance.*

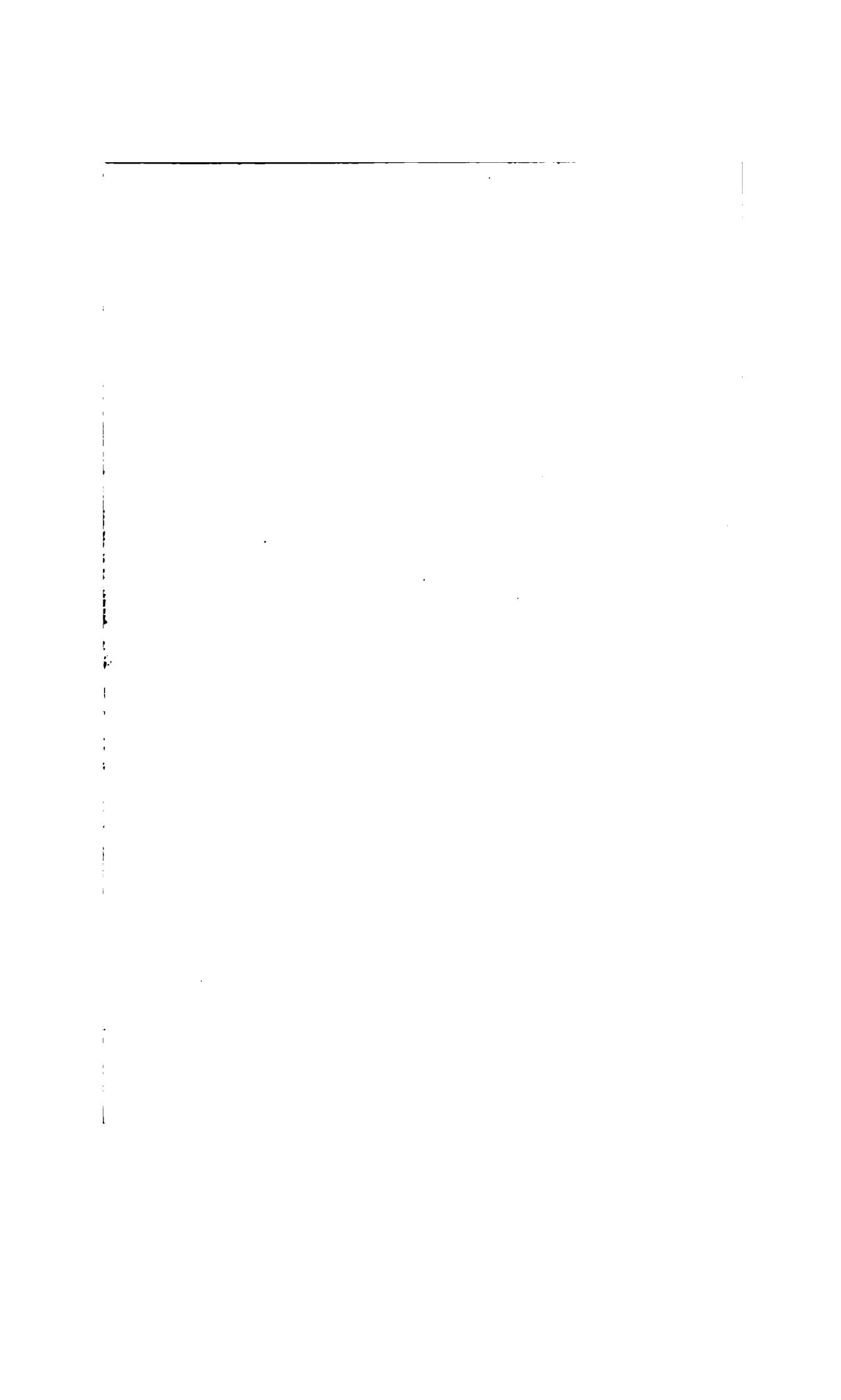
[*Exeunt.*

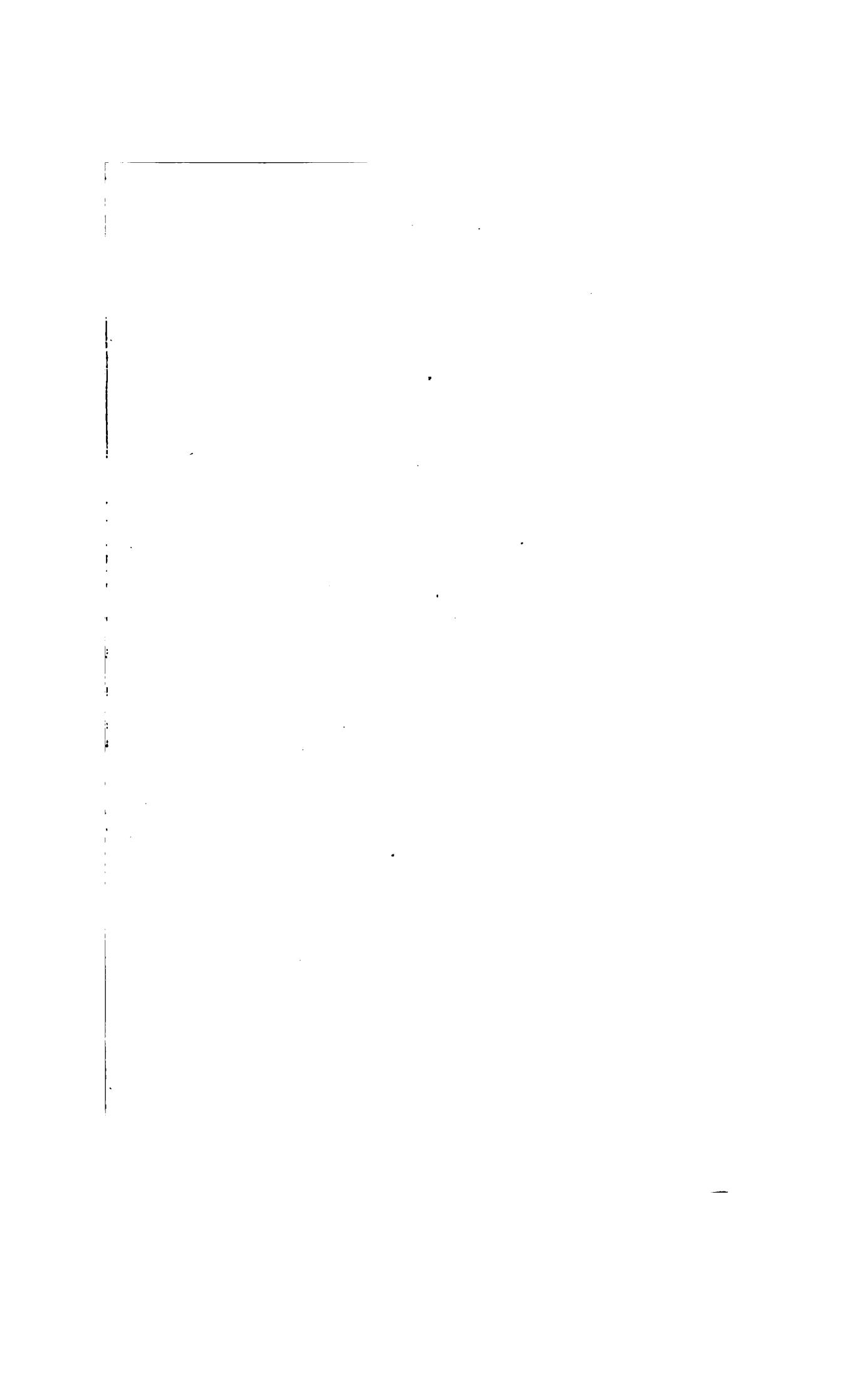
END OF VOLUME TWELFTH.













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